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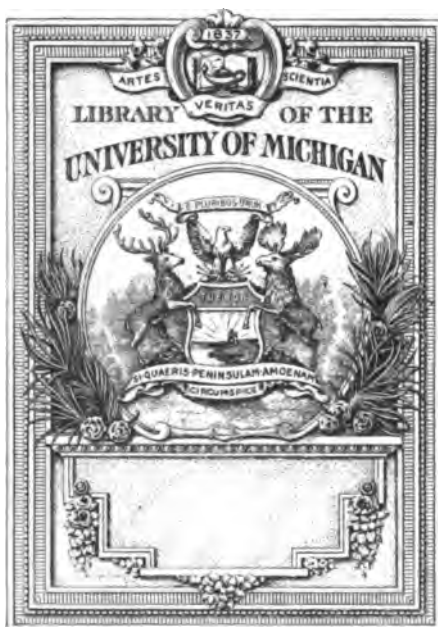
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## **Lord Leighton's Addresses**









*Photo by W. D. Downey*

*H. Melville, New York*

*Herman*  
*Melville*

Addresses  
Delivered to the Students  
of  
The Royal Academy  
By the late 101760  
*Frederic*  
Lord Leighton

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## PREFACE

I REGRET the inconvenience to which the readers of this book have been exposed by its appearance in the first edition without any guide to its contents; and I trust they will believe that the omission has been due to no carelessness on my part, but to an honest desire to efface myself in the publication. I knew that the Addresses, whatever fault they might have, had been very carefully prepared; they represented my brother's best thought and most conscientious endeavour; each complete in itself, they formed together a harmonious whole; they seemed to need no introduction or explanation. I, as my sister also, regarded the prospective volume as simply a reprint, not justifying the intrusion of an editor, least of all one so incompetent as myself to deal with the subject-matter of the work; our publishers kindly assented to my wish that no addition to it should be made which called for the introduction of my name. It was a mistaken humility; for the lectures, reprinted so long after their first appearance, were the lifeless copy of a once living thing. The ring of a human voice had gone from

them. They still held its echo for those who had heard or felt it. For the larger public, which first knew them in their posthumous form, they could only be a silent document, the contents of which must, by the usual editorial methods, be made to speak for themselves. This would have been more effectually done in the first printing of the book; but I trust the most necessary help has now been supplied.

The diffidence with which I approached my brother's work naturally inspired me with an earnest wish to leave the text as far as possible untouched. When a kind friend, Mrs. Courtenay Bell, undertook to relieve my then overtaxed eyesight by passing the collected Addresses through the press, we agreed that they should be subjected to no correction of which we could not be quite sure that the author himself would have made it. I ventured to recast one or two unusually lengthy passages; the whole had been insufficiently, I need hardly say, never wrongly punctuated; a few slight verbal improvements were required. The process has been repeated, though sparingly, since my recent more responsible study of the book. I believe that neither the first revision nor the second will have resulted in any conspicuous change. But it is difficult to limit what my brother might have done if he had lived to re-edit his discourses for the new literary conditions in which they were to appear; for they were originally intended to be heard rather

read; and though his public always included many readers, he unconsciously submitted their requirements to the test of his own voice and ear. When Mrs. Bell remarked to me on his scanty employment of stops, she added, "Your brother must have relied largely on tone values." The reliance on "tone values" or vocal expression was also, I am convinced, answerable for the tendency to verbal exuberance, the occasional lengthiness and involution of phrase, so foreign to his known habit of speech and writing, which have been charged against the work. The fault was primarily due to excess of material : to the mass of emotionalised thought and fact which had gathered round his subject during its period of incubation, and which was still too much part of himself to be quite amenable to literary form. He would have handled it more freely if the contents of his MS. had been brought before him in the extraneous character of a proof ; but he did not see them in proof ; and as he conscientiously read and re-read (curtailing and correcting wherever the necessity struck him), his faults of construction effaced themselves. His own expression, his own values, increasingly imposed themselves on the words, and deceived his literary sense for the time being.

He was not free from misgiving in regard to the substance of the discourses. On this point his judgment never misled him. He could not be blind to the exceptional merits of his work, but he knew they were not of a nature to command



general interest and appreciation. He often feared that what he had to say was beyond the immediate grasp of the students to whom it was addressed ; and if this did not impel him to change his course, it was because no other way was open to him. His intellectual conception of the subject with which he dealt, his emotional attitude towards it, alike rendered a less serious treatment impossible.

The didactic quality inevitably present in the lectures may justify me in alluding to a touching characteristic of my brother's nature which, prominent though it was, cannot have been very widely known. The admonitions contained in the book before us deal rather with the motives than with the methods of art, and have little direct bearing on the question of artistic execution ; but wherever Frederic Leighton directly taught, he was qualified to do so by his persistent attitude as a learner. His great gifts were equalled by his humility. I am not writing a chapter of reminiscences, and will not multiply proofs of what constitutes the truth of this assertion : his habitual depreciation of his own work, his patience under criticism or disparagement of it by others. One short phrase, spoken on his deathbed, resume them all. He had often, in earlier years, express his dread of unconscious artistic deterioration the unconscious failing of sight and judgment which the work of older artists too often reveal and had been comforted during his last few days by the assurance of some of his colleagues

that the pictures then on his easels were as powerful as anything he had yet produced, that they showed signs of improvement rather than of decline. There was a moment in the course of his last brief illness in which he was led to believe that a favourable crisis had taken place, and that life with renewed health was returning to him. He had much to live for: affection, friendship, and worldly honours of that best kind which means the recognition of worth. The fancied reprieve was welcome. But the one boon involved in it in regard to which he claimed our sympathy was the restored opportunity for improved work. "Would it not," he exclaimed, "have been a pity, if I had had to die just when I was going to paint better?"

This modest estimate of himself had its natural counterpart in the often admiring and always ungrudging sympathy which he gave to the work of others. He welcomed every evidence of vitality in art, every expression of individual artistic impulse, however alien it might be to the character of his own genius. The wide justice thus combined with passionate personal prepossessions formed an essential attribute of his art life, and no quality perhaps of Leighton's richly endowed nature impressed itself so strongly on his official career.

In departing from the merely personal apology or explanation which this preface required, I have not addressed myself to the narrower public to

whom my brother was personally known. Within its social, literary, and artistic circles, both he and his performance have been weighed and measured, sometimes with scant justice, more often, I believe, with true and generous appreciation. In regard to these, my testimony is belated, and may easily be considered superfluous. But I trust the Addresses are finding many readers to whom their author was little more than a name; and if a word of mine can bring the man as he lived and worked but one step nearer to their retrospective knowledge and sympathy, it will surely have its excuse.

A. ORR.

*March 1897.*

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**ADDRESS**

**DECEMBER 10TH, 1879**



## STUDENTS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

Addressing you for the first time, at some length, on the threshold of those relations which my office establishes between us, and which a deep and sympathetic interest in your artistic growth and welfare makes especially weighty in my eyes, I am impelled to set aside, for once at least, all purely practical and technical matters, and to ask you, rather to look with me for a moment into a wider and deeper question—that of the position of Art in its relation to the world at large in the present and in the past time, that we may gather if possible from this survey something of its prospects in the future.

I wish in so doing to seek with you the solution of certain perplexities and doubts which will often, in these days of restless self-questioning in which we live, arise in the minds and weigh on the hearts of students who think as well as work.

These perplexities, which few are fortunate enough wholly to escape, arise sooner in some and later in other organisations, and present themselves only at a certain stage of advancement in

the artist's mental development ; for the gift of artistic production manifests itself in the young in an impulse so spontaneous and so imperative, and is in its origin so wholly emotional and independent of the action of the intellect, that it at first, and for some time, entirely absorbs their energies. The student's first steps on the bright paths of his working life are obscured by no shadows save those cast by the difficulties of a technical nature which lie before him ; and these difficulties, which, indeed, he only half discerns, serve rather to whet his appetite than to hamper or discourage him, for his heart whispers that when he shall have brushed them aside the road will be clear before him, and the utterance of what he feels stirring within him will be from thenceforward one long unchecked delight. This spirit of spontaneous, unquestioning rejoicing in production, which is still the privilege of youth, and which, even now, the very strong sometimes carry with them through their lives, was, indeed, when Art herself was in her prime, the normal and constant condition of the artistic temper, and shone out in all artistic work. It is this spirit which gave a perennial freshness to Athenian Art—the serenest and most spontaneous men have ever seen. And when again, after many centuries, another Art was born out of the night of the Dark Ages, and shed its gentle light over the chaos of society, this spirit once more burst through it into flame. All forms of Art were alike fired with it. Architecture first,

exulting in new flights of vigorous and bold creation ; then Sculpture ; last Painting, virtually a new Art, looked out on to the world with the wondering delight of a child, timidly at first, but soon to fill it with the bright expression of its joy. Those were halcyon days ; the questions "Why do I paint ?" "Why do I model ?" "Why should I build beautifully ?" "What—how shall I build, model, paint ?" had no existence in the mind of the artist. "Why," he might have answered, "does the lark soar and sing ?"

We need not follow the vicissitudes of this spirit, which, born anew in every true artist, ever fights hard for its life ; it is enough to say that in the days in which we live it is subjected to an ordeal of which it knew nothing in the past ; the questioning spirit is now abroad, it asserts itself on all sides, and is paramount ; it leaves nothing unassailed, takes nothing for granted, calls every belief to account, casts everything into the balance. I will not complain that this is so, for, of a certainty, whatever deserves to live will survive the ordeal ; but the present result is this, that unconscious work has become and will be henceforth all but impossible ; the critical intelligence stands by the imagination at her work, and Fancy no longer walks alone. We are the children of our time, we breathe perforce the intellectual atmosphere in which we move, we could not if we would close our hearts to the questions which arise within us ; they force themselves upon us, we must face them,

we must seek to answer them ; and so at some period of our lives most of us will be led to ask themselves, "What *is* Art in the world? is it a lasting, living thing, or is it an ephemeral apparition? has it still power of growth within it, and capability of further expansion? or has it reached, already, its full and final developments? If it has power of growth, what form may we expect that growth to take?"

These queries, indeed, meet us at every turn when we meditate on the past history of civilisation ; they meet us when we compare the growth and steady evolution of Art in the periods of its greatness with the eclectic instability and indefiniteness of purpose of our own day ; they meet us when we consider the circumstances and surrounding conditions, material and intellectual, in the midst of which it grew and thrived, noting the impulse and the impress imparted to it by those circumstances, and then compare them with the atmosphere in which it fights for life in the present time.

Let us take one or two illustrations of these points drawn from the several Arts.

In Architecture we find the most striking example of organic evolution in the outcome of that mighty wave of energy which in the Middle Ages swept over the greater part of Europe, by the agency of the Germanic races, and through which certain principles, æsthetic and scientific, worked out their development, with such variations as

varying external conditions determined, but with a logical force and a central continuity of purpose wholly unrivalled.

In Sculpture the most memorable evolution is that which the fifth century saw in Greece. Greek Sculpture, indeed, was so dazzlingly swift and so suddenly triumphant in its eclosion that we are apt to think of it as having risen like the sun full-orbed and supreme out of the antecedent darkness; but this is not so, the growing process, though prodigiously rapid, is yet distinctly to be followed. The difference between the rigid warrior carved on the monumental stele which bears the name of Aristocles, and the godlike forms which on the eastern pediment of the Parthenon once caught the first flush of morning over the shoulder of Hymettus, is greater than that which separates the works of the early Tuscan sculptors from the Moses of Michael Angelo; it is also more startling because the period within which they were produced was infinitely shorter; nevertheless, the evidences of gradual progression are plainly visible, and its tide marks are to be traced in monuments of its successive stages.

The evolution of Painting in Italy was as spontaneous and consistent as that of Architecture in Central Europe and England, and it is, if not richer or more multiform, at least more striking in its many-sidedness on account of the close proximity to one another in which we see its various offshoots rise, expand, and reach to full



maturity ; and this proximity brings vividly before us an instance of that influence on the development of Art of surrounding conditions at which I have already hinted ; for if we are impressed with the continuous evolution of the School—an evolution which we pursue in singular fulness of gradation, from Giotto and his followers, through the quattro-centisti and the forerunner Leonardo, to the triumphant days of Raphael, Titian, and Correggio—we are not less struck and fascinated by the varieties of local flavour and distinctive characteristics which enrich and diversify it. In all the chief artistic centres of Italy we find Art in its growth ever taking its mould from the local characteristics of the race, and everywhere these characteristics demanding expression in the form of Art. In Venice, for example, we see the strenuous fervour of the people, its keen and peculiar sense of Beauty, its pride of power, its love of splendour, finding due expression in the works of its great masters, from Carpaccio to Titian. But it is, perhaps, in Tuscany, and notably in Florence, that we see the national temperament most clearly declared in its Art, as indeed in all its intellectual productions ; here we see that strange mixture of Attic subtlety and exquisiteness of taste, with a sombre fervour and a rude Pelasgic strength which marks the Tuscans, sending forth a Dante, a Brunellesco, and a Michael Angelo—a Fiesole, a Boccaccio, and a Botticelli, and we find that eagerness in the pur-

suit of the knowledge of men and things which was so characteristic of them, summed up in a Macchiavelli and a Leonardo da Vinci.

I need not further follow this connection, which may be traced in every country and age in which the Arts have flourished, and which is, of course, as constant in Architecture and Sculpture as in Painting ; enough has been said to illustrate the second fact which is manifest to the student who turns his thoughts to ancient Art, namely, that whilst its growth has always been organic and continuous, it has also been in harmony with the ethical, the intellectual, and the æsthetic characteristics of the societies in the midst of which it arose ; and that it was therefore homogeneous and sincere, treading in security on definite paths, ministering, as a matter of course, to a love of the beautiful and the stately which was instinctive and universal.

But when the student, awakening from the contemplation of an Art growing a mighty growth in a genial soil and a favouring atmosphere, turns to the days and places in which his lot is cast, how different a spectacle is revealed to him ; the whole current of human life setting resolutely in a direction opposed to artistic production ; no love of beauty, no sense of the outward dignity and comeliness of things calling on the part of the public for expression at his hands, and, as a corollary, no dignity, no comeliness, for the most part, in their outward aspect ;

everywhere a narrow utilitarianism which does not include the gratification of the artistic sense amongst things useful; the works of artists sought for indeed but too often as a profitable merchandise or a vehicle of speculation, too often on grounds wholly foreign to their intrinsic worth as productions of a distinctive form of human genius with laws and conditions of its own. All this he sees, and a chilling doubt may well sometimes creep to his heart whether he has in modern society a lawful place, a meaning, and a justification.

That in such an absence of directing current in the general mind that definiteness of flow and harmony of onward impulse which he noted in ancient Art should not be evident does not surprise him. But if, thus thrown on his own resources and trusting to his own strength, he seeks to shape for himself a course along the sure paths of tradition, fresh perplexities await him, for he becomes aware that every one of the great productive bursts of energy which have borne such noble fruit in the past has, on reaching a given point, shown signs of being spent; it had touched the full height of its power of expansion, its supreme expression had been found, and as if to show that its mission was achieved, collapse, atrophy, and decay, more or less complete, swiftly followed, after living force hollow pedantry, pretentious mannerism—then the end.

Yet more bewildering to the student than this

reflection—for, indeed, the notion of decay finds slow and difficult access to the minds of the young—is the infinite variety of examples which Time has set before him. The fortunate but bewildered heir to a boundless inheritance of artistic treasure, he finds himself frequently in the presence, almost at the same moment, of various works, each of high excellence, all bearing the impress of genius, and yet wholly different one from the other in the manner of their excellence, each apparently preaching to him a different doctrine and beckoning to him in a different direction. He will see on the same day a work by Phidias and a work by Michael Angelo—a portion of the Parthenon and a fragment from Lincoln Cathedral—a canvas signed by Titian and one from the hand of Albert Dürer—a Rembrandt, and a Masaccio; all noble works, yet all how different! Whom then shall he follow? whom out of so many giants shall he propose to himself as his model?

But with this question a further misgiving mixes itself, and he is forced to ask himself whether the great masters of old, if they could live again in our day, would not produce works in many ways different from those which they have left us, and whether to follow them in the letter would not be to wander from them in the spirit.

If he then turns for light to contemporary Art he is again, and finally, baffled; for whilst, in the past, he saw wide differences between school and

school, between age and age, he finds in his own time all these divergences asserting themselves side by side and simultaneously in each several country; brilliant gifts he sees, indeed, in his own and in foreign lands, but cohesion, consent, or concurrence of effort, none either here or there.

Let us, before going further, just sum up in a few words these various stumbling-blocks, partly theoretical and partly practical, which I have shown you standing on the paths of the inquiring student. They are as follows: the apparent absence in the present day first of that inner organic growth, and secondly of those fostering outward conditions which are seen in and around Art in the old times; then the perplexing collapse of the several exhibitions of artistic force successively put forth in the past; both circumstances leading to the question how far Art, torn from the parent stem of continuous tradition, can survive otherwise than spasmodically; and lastly, the doubt, how in the conflict of counsel and high example he shall find guidance for himself. The first two of these considerations connect themselves, as we said, with that fundamental question to which I alluded at the outset: Is Art an ephemeral thing, a mere passing flower of the human intellect, or is it fed by constant deep-lying forces, from the stability of which we may expect new forms of development? And the last of them suggests this further inquiry: Does not some common bond underlie all genuine manifes-

tations of artistic excellence, however diverse in their specific form?

To the first of these questions we shall, I think, presently see the answer to be this : That Art is fed by forces which lie in the depths of our nature and which are as old as man himself ; of which therefore we need not doubt the durability ; and to the question whether Art, with all its blossoms, has not one root, the answer we shall see to be : Assuredly it has ; for its outward modes of expression are many and various, but its underlying vital motives are the same.

The level sapphire in which I have seen a Greek fisherman's boat mirror its amber sides is not more unlike the blue anger of the Atlantic chafed by the storm, or the dim grey of the wash that laps the shores of the Zuyder Zee, than the pure Elysium of Beato Angelico is unlike the Hell of Michael Angelo or the placid home-scenes of the Dutch ; yet they are but moods and changes of the great deep that flows for ever about the skirts of our habitable earth.

In order to test the soundness of these assertions we must for a moment look beyond the creations of artistic genius themselves, and inquire into the sources of our delight in them. Now, what are these sources ? Primarily the source of all Art whatsoever — of Poetry, of Music, of Architecture (as distinct from building), of Painting, of Sculpture, and I might add of Dancing, once intimately allied with and in-

separable from Poetry as well as from Music—is the consciousness of emotion in the presence of the phenomena of Life and Nature. This conscious emotion, this momentary intensification of life it was which, seeking for a vent either through some direct form of personal utterance, ejaculation, or movement of the body, or through the endeavour to imitate the object which aroused it, called Art into existence ; for Art is based on the desire to express and the power to kindle in others emotion astir in the artist, and latent in those to whom he addresses himself.

The channels through which the several Arts gain access to our feelings are various :—Poetry and Music, twinborn sisters and long undivided, play on a sense of rhythm and melody universal in men. Painting and Sculpture appeal to other sides of our æsthetic sensibility : the perception of Form and Colour, which latter has in its action upon us much in common with melody, of proportion, which is to intervals of space what rhythm is to intervals of time, and of light and shade. Architecture, whilst playing upon the same perceptions as Painting and Sculpture, differs from them and from Literature, and is, on the other hand, akin to Music in this, that her instrument is not, except when she allies herself with Sculpture, the direct imitation or reproduction of outward facts.

Let us confine our attention to the Arts which more especially concern ourselves.

On the antiquity of the impulse to express delight in visible objects by direct imitation of their forms, it is needless to insist, the prehistoric cave-bones are there to witness to it. The more abstract pleasure in form and colour, for their own sakes and independently of imitation, is no less ancient. Man, as far back as we can trace his habits, has found satisfaction in covering his body, his abode, his garments, his weapons, his utensils, with arrangements of colour and form which, where imitation was not attempted, could have no significance save in the gratification arising out of those forms and colours in themselves, or out of their combinations. The blind, untutored instinct which found satisfaction in these rude adornments is the first dawn of that conscious and now highly-cultivated sensibility on which Art in its highest development plays as upon an instrument. This is not the moment to consider specially, nor is it necessary in addressing a body of artists, to insist on the numerous phenomena through which this sensibility is aroused ; but in estimating its range we must bear in mind that its activity is immeasurably heightened by the operation of associated ideas working on the imagination ; through that operation a given combination of form and colour will convey infinitely more to us than is contained in the simple sensation, however delightful, directly produced by it on our nervous system.

It is this power to excite certain sides of our æsthetic sensibility, and not its power of imitation,



in which the strength of our Arts regarded as a language, lies—which enables them to stir mankind in depths and recesses of its being wholly inaccessible through any other channel, and to acquaint it with joys which without them would have no existence.

The simplest and most unmixed expression of the delightfulness of abstract form in Art is found in pure ornament of a conventional character ; ornament, that is, from which direct imitation of natural objects is excluded ; as, for instance, to take its, perhaps, most beautiful exemplification, in Arab or Persian decoration ; and those who are familiar with this decoration will acknowledge the charm and the fascination of its exquisite intricacies. The loftiest and gravest expression of this quality is seen in Architecture, in which, conspiring with other sources of expression such as dimension, stability, spaciousness, nobility of material, it lays the most powerful hold on our imagination.

In Painting, however—if we except for the moment that branch of it of which landscape is the subject—and in Sculpture, we find ourselves at once face to face with another element of absorbing interest. In the emotion aroused by the phenomena of life, which we said was at the root of all Art, the central and culminating fact is our interest in Man ; he is, and must always be, the end and the means of whatever is greatest in the plastic Arts—as in every Art that tells of him ; in the Art of Phidias,

in the Art of Leonardo, in the Art of Homer, in the Art of Shakespeare.

This passionate interest, which is as warm now as at any period of the life of mankind, and which shows itself alike in the popularity of the Drama and its extraordinary power to rivet and stir the masses, and in the not less remarkable fascination exercised by works of fiction, is a factor which asserts itself imperatively as soon as man appears upon the stage of Art. The sincerity and directness of its expression is in Art an irresistible charm, and suffices to us in works in which the purely artistic quality is still feeble and undeveloped. The most deeply impressive works are those in which the human interest and the æsthetic quality are most fully blended. Decay is imminent when the expression of this interest ceases to be sincere, and man no longer recognises his humanity in Art.

As far back as we find traces of the working of men's minds we recognise this absorbing interest in man and man's life. The earliest monuments of Literature reveal the anthropomorphic impulse which made men see in the planets that rule the day and the night, beings after their own image, and in all the phenomena of the universe—in the waxing and waning of the year, in the procession of the months and of the days, in the rising and setting of the sun—scenes of a great cosmic drama, inflamed with every human passion and not unstained with blood.

And this instinctive tendency to see our own image everywhere, and to project it over all created things still lives on, need I remind you? in the chambers of the imagination, and expresses itself in the form of metaphor. The poets in their glowing imagery have never ceased to clothe Nature and her forces in the attributes of men; in their language the firmament and the heavenly bodies, the sea and its storms, the earth and the flowers that clothe it, the revolving seasons, the hours of the day, still assume a personality, and the moods and passions of humanity. Hear the Psalmist :

"The floods have *lifted up their voice.*"

"The waters *saw Thee; they were afraid.*"

And again :

"The earth *saw and trembled.*"

Dante sees in darkness the *silence* of the sun—"la dove il sol *tace.*" Day, Shakespeare tells us, "*jocund day stands tiptoe* on the misty mountain-top." To the "wild west wind" Shelley exclaims, "Thine azure sister of the spring shall *blow her clarion* o'er the dreaming earth."

Numberless similar metaphors will occur to your minds.

But beyond this transforming activity of the imagination there is a deeper and more intimate sentiment which mixes with our perception of the aspects of Nature, a sense of their direct relation to man and of the influence on our consciousness

of his presence or absence in their midst. I will give you an instance which is probably within the experience of you all. You have been contemplating somewhere, far away in the falling daylight, some broad sweep of empty, uninhabited moor, such as Mason might have loved to paint ; you are impressed with its silent solitude, it weighs upon you ; presently you discover in the gloom a glimmering streak, winding towards the horizon ; it is a path ; the footprints of men have suddenly lit up the loneliness of the scene, a vague image of the narrow stream of life that comes and goes along that solitary track is stirred within you and has quickened and greatly heightened the poetic force of your emotions.

And as in some cases the trace of man's presence is a source of sympathetic stirrings, so also in others will the sense of his absence affect the imagination ; inaccessible regions strike us with a vague awe, the desolation of a once inhabited city moves us profoundly ; and, again, when Shelley speaks of the " Deep's *untrampled* floor," he lays bare one of the sources of the impressiveness of the wide pathless ocean.

In each of these instances, whether through his absence or through his intervention, the haunting, ever-present thought of Man is the underlying fact ; and as in Poetry, so in Painting and Sculpture, this central importance of man is ever asserting itself. Man's strength and beauty, his acts, heroic or homely, his gladness and his sorrow, his

life and his death—these are the materials in which painters and sculptors have ever found unfailing inspiration. But human sympathy operates also in another and a very vital manner in our appreciation of Painting and of Sculpture, for in a Painting or a Statue our enjoyment, irrespective of the satisfaction of our purely artistic sense, is derived, not merely from our general human sympathy, but from the reflection in the work of the artist's self.

This is a most important fact ; I should wish to make it clear.

We saw a short time back that, in common with all Art, Painting and Sculpture were an expression of emotions excited in the artist by the outward facts of nature and life. Such emotions are of a necessity personal to the artist ; they vary indefinitely according to the infinite varieties of artistic temperament and sensitiveness, much as the same note will vary in richness and quality of sound according to this or that peculiarity of make or material in the instrument from which it is drawn. Every emotion that reaches us through the channels of an artist's temperament comes to us coloured and determined by the idiosyncrasy of that temperament, and we get the man added to the thing. The impression produced on us is of a sensation of which we recognise the germs within ourselves, but which is modified and controlled by another sensation more or less new to us, but evidently spontaneous in the artist, who com-

municates it to us, and who is thus himself revealed to us in his work. This is the secret of the fascination of that work; and an ineffable weariness seizes us in the prolonged contemplation of all Art which is devoid of this stamp of personality.

If we cast a glance over what of greatest Ancient Art has left to us we shall see how universally present is this source of interest.

To a superficial observer it is for obvious reasons least strikingly evident in its manifestation in Greek Sculpture. At Athens, where the public concern was the care of all, and where the individual was merged in the Athenian, and where, further, Art dealt almost wholly with the ideal presentment of the human body in its prime, the difference between the works of one artist and those of another would necessarily not be so abruptly marked as that which we note in the works of artists of the Renaissance and of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the several Greek artists were defined and recognised; and we must further remember that no shade of difference, however subtle, escaped the unapproached and amazing delicacy of Athenian perception.

But it is in Italy, with the dawn of the Renaissance, that the triumph of individuality most loudly declares itself. The dignity of man—and, as a corollary, the worth of man according to his individual achievement—was the inspiring idea of that great revulsion of humanity. This idea

asserted itself in every form of human energy, and not least conspicuously in Art. We saw just now that each province had its distinct artistic stamp; but within the broader distinction of the schools again, what a triumphant development of the individual! I need not weary you with many examples; innumerable names will occur to you in illustration of what I have said; take any four or five at random—Fiesole, Leonardo, Mantegna, Michael Angelo, Raphael. How intimately we know in all its tenderness the pure and reverent soul of Fiesole; how thoroughly penetrating a personality pervades every work of Leonardo da Vinci; how distinctive is the sculpturesque severity of Mantegna; how hauntingly does the sad ascetic soul of Michael Angelo breathe through the whole range of his Dantesque creations; and the chaste serenity of the stately forms with which Raphael filled the world in days obscured with crime and foul with every filth, was it not indeed begotten within his “mind’s internal heaven?” Again, turning to other countries and more recent times, what a contrast of individualities is offered to us within a narrow strip of land, between the redundant pomps and exorbitant rejoicings of Rubens and the deep pathos which hides in the fantastic glooms of Rembrandt’s visionary world? Or, to come yet nearer home, what personality was ever imparted with an effect more witching and irresistible than that of our own countryman, Thomas Gainsborough? What genius was ever

more spontaneous or more magnificently individual than the genius of that other great English painter, Joseph Mallord William Turner? And the mention of this supreme name leads me to remind you in passing that if there is no form of Art more apt to sink into the depths of platitude and insignificance, none is also more capable than landscape of reaching the highest flights of imaginative expression in the hands of a man of high poetic personality.

Here a word of caution is necessary. It might seem at the first glance that this doctrine of personality in Art furnishes a cloak to every eccentricity and an allurements to egotistic display. I would therefore ask you to understand at once and clearly that if the impress on a work of Art of a noble personality is its greatest charm, so the traces of a disordered or a vulgar temperament are wholly and fatally repellent. Indeed, a few moments' reflection will make it evident that in proportion to the prominence of the part played by idiosyncrasy in Art will be the importance of the quality and temper of that idiosyncrasy; we demand of it that it be sincere, that it have power to stir our æsthetic sense, to move our humanity and to excite our imagination, and we require in it dignity and self-control; and without some or all of these latter qualities the first, great as it is, will fail to satisfy us, though it win our esteem; as you shall see by an illustration. If you chance upon a work of Denner, or of Seibold—a head, say, of



an old man or woman—you will be forced to recognise in it certain undeniable qualities ; a singular power of preserving general relations of light and shade in the midst of a multitude of microscopic details ; you will find one aspect, at all events, of a human countenance brought before you with extraordinary truth and accuracy—and through all, a transparent sincerity. But you will feel at once that the man who can cheerfully devote absorbing care through countless hours to the minute rendering of an undelightful network of pockmarks and pimples has no emotions to communicate to you that you are anxious to share ;—you wonder—yawn—and pass on.

Again, the finest idiosyncrasy when not under healthy self-control may affect us painfully. Take as an illustration the case of the most powerful and splendid artistic individuality this country has produced, that of Turner, to whom I have just alluded ; it is undeniable that his stamp is set even, if possible, more distinctly on his latest and most eccentric works than on those produced in the balanced fulness of his powers, but we see in them the traces of “a noble mind o’erthrown,” and the most reverent of his admirers must, sometimes, turn away from them in sorrow.

I have not, in what I have hitherto said, touched on the question of the ethical aspects of Art, or asked how far the mission of the artist is, or whether it is at all, a definitely didactic one. This is a wide subject, and would lead me too far

to-day. I may, perhaps, consider it on some future similar occasion ; I mention it merely lest I should seem to you to ignore it.

Meanwhile, let us pause a moment and recapitulate. What have we so far established? First, in our endeavour to trace the feeding springs of Art, we found ourselves led back to the furthest dawn of human existence, as far as we know anything of it ; we saw men rejoicing in or awed by the phenomena of life and of nature, and seeking to express that delight or that awe, and we saw that the endeavour to reproduce these emotions and to communicate them to others was the common spring of all forms of Art ; and, further, that the impulse to reproduce them, partly by the direct visible imitation of outer objects and partly by the presentment of forms and colours, or of certain combinations of forms and colours in which men were conscious of delighting, was the special source of the plastic Arts ; and we noted that this faculty of receiving emotion through the organ of sight from certain properties of matter had received by degrees an incalculable accretion of strength and scope through the association of ideas and the action of the imagination ; then we were struck by the absorbing interest of men in their kind, and the paramount influence it exercises over our appreciation of all Art in which man is the protagonist. And we found this interest working in two ways. We saw it giving value to a work of Art, on the one hand as a vivid outward present-

ment of man and of his life as we know them, and on the other as a revelation of the inward man in the artist himself.

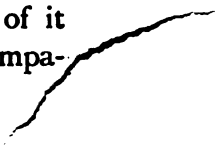
In sum we recognised that Art was as old as man, and that its life-springs leap from the inmost recesses of our human nature ; and we shall therefore confidently infer that they are perennial, and that this ancient stream of pure and lofty joys will not dry up or fail from us in the future.

And, secondly, we were aware that the difference between the various aspects under which Art has manifested itself to us is not due to the complexity of its sources—for its stream, fed by various tributaries, is yet one—but simply to the fact that it is poured out to us through innumerable channels of varying human temperaments, and comes to us impregnated and transformed by them ; and from this reflection, again, we shall infer that its constant streams, flowing through ever new channels of sincere artistic souls, may, and will, continue to delight us in new and ever-varying ways.

That surrounding circumstances should always be equally favourable to the life and growth of Art is indeed not to be expected. At various periods in the development of humanity the different bents and forces of human intelligence will assert a varying sway. Certain periods will be favourable to artistic production, periods in which the æsthetic sensibility will be in the ascendant, and will, by the constant demand for what is beautiful, so act on and transform the outer aspect of

things that they will offer more food for the artistic temper, and richer material for it to work on. There will be periods also in which the proclivity of men's minds will set in other directions and the current of progress will seek other channels, periods in which the artist searching for beauty will glean but in a meagre field ; such a period is that through which we are now passing, but I know no more striking testimony to the vitality of Art than the fact that it was never more tenaciously pursued than it is at present ; assuredly it was never more needed, it never was, perhaps, so great a boon, and the privilege of holding high the torch in the passing darkness is one of which you may well be proud.

But if the days on which we have fallen are unpropitious in various ways, it would be blindness to assert that there is not in the midst of much and great artistic energy also some distinct artistic current to be traced. There is, on the contrary, a very definite current observable, and one which is the more undeniable that it is perceptible in a more or less degree all over Europe. It tends in the direction of a more intimate fidelity to nature in its outward aspects, partly through a closer rendering of certain effects of light and atmosphere, and partly through a more accurate and delicate observance of gesture and motion. This movement has evidently great elements of good ; it is the outcome of sincerity, and the phase of it last alluded to indicates a nearer and more sympa-



thetic insight into human nature ; but it has also its alloy, for an excessive absorption of the attention in the most superficial aspect of things tends to the over-development of the simply imitative faculty, which is the lowest gift of the artist, at the cost of his æsthetic faculty and of his imagination, which are the noblest, and tends therefore also to triviality and loss of that which gives to Art its high place amongst the elements of civilisation.

The question, what development Art may be expected to assume in the future, naturally connects itself with the foregoing considerations ; on which point only the most general surmises are possible to us. It seems, however, probable that in the absence of a strong welding impulse from without, isolated individual effort will continue to be, as it now is, more marked than collective onward movement. Whether the loss of concentrated energy in each individual school will be compensated by a greater development of well-balanced personalities remains to be seen. For some time we shall no doubt find the various tendencies of the artistic force sharply divided. On one end of the scale there will be men vividly impressed with and moved by all the facts of life, and a powerful vitality will lend charm and light to their works ; on the other we may expect to find men who are more strongly affected by those qualities in which Art is most akin to Music, and in their works the poetry of form and colour will

be thrown as a lovely garment over abstract ideas or fabled events. Many links will no doubt connect these extremes, and by degrees, perhaps, a weaving under-current will, by its silent action throughout the world, draw them more closely together, to their mutual strengthening. Realism, no longer a thing of to-day, will confess with gratitude the magnificent inheritance to which it is born, and will be raised and purified by its teaching; Idealism will gain, perchance, in contact with the real a yet fuller and richer life and a more penetrating expressional force; and Art, acknowledging the present without relinquishing the past, will, it may be, find in the future new and noble developments of its Protean splendour.

What I have said in this hasty glance at the aspects of contemporary Art and its capability of development, applies in an especial manner to Painting; but it embraces Sculpture no less, though with some modifications, for the two Arts move within different conditions. Sublime as is Sculpture in the altitude of its flight, it is of a necessity more limited than Painting in its range and more fettered in its expression. Certain conditions also are imperatively imposed on it by the nature of the materials in which it works. These subjects will be no doubt fully developed in the lectures of your professors of Sculpture; for me it is enough here to say that of the three aspects under which life presents itself to our eye, namely, Form, Action, and Colour, Sculpture dealing with the

two first only, it will rise or sink according to the dignity and interest it imparts to the form and action it puts before us, and that its merits will be further gauged by the mode in which it develops the resources and conforms to the character of the several materials in which it works. Of its general tendency this may, perhaps, be conjectured, that it will take an increasingly wide view of the quality of Beauty; it will think of that word not as the label only of one or two types corresponding to certain immovable ideas, but will conceive Beauty rather to be an attribute common to many of the moulds in which the spirit is cast, and of which one chief characteristic is absolute consent and harmony of component parts. No two things could be more dissimilar than a hero from the hand of Phidias and a prophet carved by Michael Angelo; yet under the high serenity of the one and the half-lulled storm of the other this internal harmony and absolute consent of parts is equally conspicuous, and, prefer which you will, both assuredly are supreme and immortal works. And so we may, perhaps, find this chastest of the Arts, not indeed descending from its high estate, but drawing up to itself, in this way amongst others, the elements of a wider life.

Of Architecture I have said nothing in the latter part of this discourse; it has not been an oversight, but, in fact, in spite of the close and radical kinship which exists between Architecture and the Arts which work by imitation, it is impos-

sible to speak of the three in terms absolutely applicable to all. The developments of Architecture are more immediately determined and more profoundly modified than those of Painting and Sculpture by circumstances external to it. Far, indeed, be it from me to say that personality, and even a very pronounced personality, finds no scope in the works of the Architect—it would be a bad day for Art in which that were true—but he moves under restraints not imposed on his brother of the brush, or even of the chisel. The practical wants of his day and of the land in which he lives, the particular conditions put before him in each individual case with which he has to deal, the nature of the materials at his command, the various purely scientific problems which arise out of them, all these are bonds from which he cannot withdraw himself. It must not, however, be assumed that the necessity of conforming to certain exigencies and external conditions is to Architecture an unalloyed evil ; it is, on the contrary, a constant and vivifying incentive to intellectual activity, and has given rise to some of the boldest and most brilliant of its flights. Certain it is that architects may look with a proud confidence into the future, for they practise an Art raised on an immovable basis of Science, clothing itself in forms of abstract beauty, enriched by the co-operation of Sculpture, and made yet lovelier, when it chooses, by the charm of colour. And though no man shall invent a new style, as the foolish phrase goes—for styles



are not invented but evolved—I do not doubt but that in due time the tentative and eclectic phase through which Architecture seems now to be passing, will give place to more homogeneous developments in which, whilst the individuality of the artist finds free room to assert itself, the requirements, physical and intellectual, of each particular country will achieve a more definite and distinctive expression.

And so, my young fellow-artists, if there be any among you, as probably there are, on whose hearts the doubts at which I have glanced this evening have at any time fallen, and have not been burnt up like idle straw in the flame of their youthful energies, I would say to them : put those doubts confidently away ; have faith that the stirrings which you feel within you are not the last spent waves of a retreating tide, but the pulses of a living force, now indeed fuller and now more feeble, but as old as our humanity, and of which the days are not numbered. Do not, in giving utterance to them, vex yourselves with the question whom you shall follow, for if following means imitation you shall follow none. Study with deep and reverent admiration—and that admiration cannot be too deep or too reverent—the works of the great men who have gone before you ; brace and fortify yourselves in the contemplation of their strength ; catch what you may of the fire that was in them ; walk in their light, enrich and enlarge your powers by the knowledge and under-

standing of the means by which they move us ; but never forget that the common greatness of them all is their sincerity, and that it is only through sincerity that you can hope to emulate them even from afar ; be assured that your work, in order that it may live, must be the direct and truthful reproduction of your own individual emotions, not the echo of the emotions of others. Without sincerity of emotion no gift, however facile and specious, will avail you to win the lasting sympathies of men, for, as Goethe has truly said,

“ The chord that wakes in kindred hearts a tone,  
Must first be tuned and vibrate in your own.”



ADDRESS

DECEMBER 10TH, 1881

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STUDENTS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

When, at our last biennial gathering, I addressed you from this place, it was my endeavour to indicate to you, with what conciseness so wide a subject permitted, a solution to certain doubts and perplexities concerning the position of Art in the Modern World, which, as I said, are apt in these days to assail the minds of students who think as well as work.

I sought to show you, in answer to these doubts, that we have no cause for misgiving in regard to the continued vitality of the Arts we follow, inasmuch as they have their root in deep needs and undying instincts in our common nature; and I exhorted you to work on in unwavering faith that the day is not at hand when the expression of æsthetic emotion through the forms of Art shall fail for lack of answering echo in the hearts of men.

There is, however, a grave question connected with the imitative arts of Painting and Sculpture to which, on that occasion, I only passingly alluded, and to which I purpose to devote a few words this evening; a question on which widely

divergent opinions stand opposed one to the other, and are upheld with equal tenacity ; namely, the question : "What is the relation in which Art stands to Morals and to Religion ?"

The solution of this question has a twofold bearing on the young artist who is about to submit his work to the ordeal of publicity—a direct and an indirect bearing ; on the one hand, the answer to it which he frames for himself will determine the direction into which he will incline to bend his energies ; but he will, on the other, be hardly less powerfully affected by the view which prevails in regard to it in the general mind, that is to say, in the intellectual atmosphere which he breathes and by which he is, though he be unconscious of it, largely moulded ; for on the conception entertained of the aims and ends of Art must depend the mode in which its achievements are judged, and it is evident that a mistaken view of those aims and ends must taint the appreciation of the qualities exhibited in the production of a work of Art, and tend to the subversion of all sound criticism as well as to the bewilderment of those young artists whose native instincts are not sufficiently imperative to carry them unswervingly along their path.

And the problem of the relation of Art to Ethics is one which assumes in this country exceptional prominence from the mental and moral peculiarities of our race. There is, I suppose, no country in the world, unless it be the

sister-land beyond the Atlantic, in which the religious sense has exercised an influence so definite and so controlling as it has in our own on the development of the intellectual, as well as of the ethical, tone of the nation. In the moral order this sense has added incalculably to the strength and dignity of the national character ; in the intellectual order its overmastering influence has too often tended to cramp and impede that full and equal play of the intelligence without which our nature cannot yield its fullest harvest or bear its finest fruit.

There is, therefore, no country in which the task of unravelling the complex question of the true relation of Morality and Religion to Art is one of greater delicacy.

Now, what are the doctrines between which the perplexed student finds himself tossed hither and thither on a sea of controversy ?

On the one side it is asserted that the first duty of all artistic production is the inculcation of a moral lesson, if not indeed of a Christian truth ; and that the worth and dignity of a work of Art are to be gauged by the degree in which it performs this duty. Unless it preach, as from a pulpit, the cardinal doctrines of the Faith, or declare—whether by an ambiguous symbolism, or by definite embodied example—the loftiness of virtue and the deadliness of sin ; unless a very gospel made more eloquent by form and colour cry aloud to us from the canvas or from the marble—then,



we are told, the artist has laboured in vain, for his work fails in the fulfilment of the highest function of Art. With this contention connects itself naturally, if not necessarily, this other—that as a man is mirrored in his work, so the noblest work can be, and has in fact been, produced only by the most pious and God-fearing men, of the moral level of whose nature it is indeed the test, and, as it were, the tide-mark.

These views, of which, whatever their intrinsic and final value, the moral elevation is very attractive to certain natures, and which have been supported, if not substantiated, by impressive illustrations, have found many advocates, and have been proclaimed with the passionate eloquence of an overmastering conviction.

And they have been pushed to strange lengths ; some men, carried away by an unrelenting logic working on an ascetic temperament, have been impelled to assert that the application of Art to any save a definite religious end is little less than an act of moral depravity ; and a great and nobly gifted artist, Friedrich von Overbeck, has not hesitated to declare his opinion that when Raphael painted his famous Galatea in the Farnesina the Lord had abandoned him.

A further, and the strangest, development of this frame of mind, one with which I have myself in my youth, come into contact in Germany, is that which sees in the excessive love of colour an almost culpable indulgence of the senses. Such

views, indeed, are not likely to find favour or acceptance in the country of Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds; they are, nevertheless, interesting as showing to what extremes the doctrine of the dependence of Art on Religion may, and sometimes does, lead its followers.

In opposition to this doctrine it is maintained, on the other hand, that the function of Art, as such, whatever may be its incidental operation, and whatever it may include in the broad verge of its sphere of action and appeal, is absolutely unconnected with Ethics, and that its distinct and special province is to satisfy certain cravings, and excite certain emotions in our nature to which it alone has access; and that without Art not a few of our keenest and deepest capabilities of emotion would lie unaroused and barren within us.

The corollary generally attached to this proposition is this, that, as artistic production springs from æsthetic and not from ethic impulses within the artist, so the character of that production is independent of his moral attitude and unaffected by it.

These two theories, which stand arrayed one against the other, are in appearance so consistent in themselves, their respective propositions seem to flow so naturally one from the other, that the student who sees them distinctly formulated is tempted to fling himself without further question into the arms of one or of the other, accepting it unreservedly and in all its parts. My task to-

night is to give you reason, so far as the limits of our time may allow it, to doubt the wisdom of such a course, and to ask you, rather, to believe that, whilst Art is indeed, in its own nature, wholly independent of Morality, and whilst the loftiest moral purport can add no jot or tittle to the merits of a work of Art, *as such*, there is, nevertheless, no error deeper or more deadly, and I use the words in no rhetorical sense, but in their plain and sober meaning, than to deny that the moral complexion, the ethos, of the artist does in truth tinge every work of his hand, and fashion, in silence, but with the certainty of Fate, the course and current of his whole career.

Let us look more closely into these assertions.

The theory which, for convenience, we may call the didactic theory is founded on *a priori* reasoning, and is supported by reference to facts.

It is, in effect, postulated somewhat arbitrarily, by its advocates, that every higher expression of our emotional nature must, in order to merit the favour of mankind, aim directly at moral edification, and that this moral edification is to be achieved only by the inculcation of moral lessons; and it is further asserted by them that this has been in fact the character and tendency of all the greatest Art the world has seen.

There can be no doubt that the evidence which is marshalled in support of this view seems, at first sight, formidable and even overwhelming. Modern painting, using the word modern in the

wider sense and to distinguish it from that of the Ancient World, was reared, we are bid remember, on the lap of Christianity and received its loftiest themes from the Church, of which it was, as we are constantly reminded, the faithful handmaid ; and, accordingly, from the hour of its dawn to the high noon of its strength, a continuous host of divinely endowed artists is shown to us, testifying in unnumbered masterpieces to the glory of the Almighty and of his Saints. We see them handing down, undimmed, from generation to generation, the lamp of their steadfast Faith, and from the harmonious concert of their works, as from a vast consenting choir, does not a solemn anthem seem to roll across the centuries, crying from a thousand throats "Hosannah ! Hosannah in the Highest !" ?

With the decline of Faith, on the other hand, we are taught to connect that downward course of Art which begins to manifest itself towards the close of the sixteenth century ; and, in the absence of any religious afflatus in the great Dutch and Flemish Masters of the seventeenth century, we are invited to see cause, even though one of them be called Rembrandt and the other Rubens, for placing them in a rank lower than the foremost.

Nay more, turning to the Ancient World, the greater loftiness of Greek Sculpture in the Periclean than in the succeeding ages is attributed to the primitive piety which prevailed up to that period, which breathes throughout the pages of the great

Historian of Halicarnassus, and burns on the lips of the Titan Æschylus.

Time would fail me to-night to test minutely the value of the evidence which I have here summarily indicated. I will limit myself to the consideration of two or three points which suggest themselves on a closer examination of this array of facts, or rather, of assertions.

It can be argued, in the first place, that they do not comprise the whole body of evidence to which we must look, if we would form an impartial conception and take a comprehensive view of the question ; secondly, that the evidence adduced is not, even where it seems strongest, so accurately corroborative of the theory as is contended, and as may, at the first glance, seem ; and thirdly, that through the whole contention lurks the fallacy of mistaking a coefficient for a—nay for *the*—primary cause.

As a striking instance of evidence that must be either omitted by the upholders of the didactic theory, or admitted by them to be hostile to their contention, Spanish Art will at once suggest itself to you. There is probably, in the history of the world, no such illustration as that afforded to us by Catholic Spain of the absolute, irresistible, all-embracing supremacy of religious faith as a controlling influence in a national life, whether public or private ; and assuredly the lurid fervour of that faith had not waned in the days of Spanish greatness in the field of Art. That the Church

should exert her influence in that field, also, and more dictatorially even than elsewhere, was a matter of course, and accordingly we find in the Iberian Peninsula a School of religious Painters of an ascetic type, men of a stern piety, and noteworthy if not great—a Morales, for instance, who earned for himself, the surname “El Divino,” a Juanes, a Luis de Vargas, who wrought in the intervals of fasting, of prayer, and of self-flagellation, and lived in the constant contemplation of death and of the grave. Yet who will seriously claim for these men the same level of artistic excellence with that which is held by the great painters of the seventeenth century, by a Murillo, whose religious works have, with few exceptions, so little of real religious inspiration, or a Velasquez, the most mundane of painters, and Shakespearian, almost, in the width of his mental objectivity?

Again, we need not linger on the sweeping disparagement of the later Dutch and Flemish Masters, which is logically involved in the didactic theory, and which carries with it the exclusion from the highest place of that supreme painter who revealed to the world the poetry of twilight and all the magic mystery of gloom, Rembrandt of the Rhine. Let us consider rather, for a few moments, the more specious argument drawn from the growth of painting in Italy, and let us first once again call to mind the position assumed in the didactic theory: it is that the moral edification of men being the highest duty of Art, those produc-

tions of Art will take the highest rank which teach, with sincerity and of a definite purpose, the greatest number of moral truths; and that the Painter who, the gift being, of course, postulated, aims most constantly at the inculcation of these truths, will produce the greatest works. You will at once feel that these assumptions, if accepted without reservation, sap at the roots of all free criticism, practically substituting for it a foregone conclusion. A critic who approaches a work of Art under their influence will instinctively gauge it in accordance with them, however inclined he may be in the abstract to weigh it with a more scientific impartiality.

We must be careful, therefore, in testing this doctrine by the light of facts, to bear in mind, in weighing these facts, the general verdict of enlightened opinion ripened and confirmed by Time.

Now if, on a review of Italian Art from its rise to its zenith, we ask ourselves which works have by the consent of the vast majority of the intelligent been pronounced the most mature and perfect, we shall not find that verdict harmonising with one which should be built up on the axioms of the didactic theory; we shall, on the contrary, find that the evolution of Art in Italy, an evolution singularly organic and continuous, bears no ratio, unless it be an inverse ratio, to the religious life and development in the midst of which it ran its course. It is a matter of notoriety that with the more general spread of Classic Literature through-

out Italy in the fifteenth century, partly through the Italian Humanists, and partly by the agency of Greek refugees fleeing westward before the conquering hordes of Mohammed II., a disintegrating effect was produced on the religious beliefs of that country. For more than a century already a seething restlessness had obtained possession of the minds of men ; Nature was fast rising within them in rebellion against the ascetic teaching of the Church ; and when to minds so prepared the revelation was suddenly offered of a Literature fearless in speculation, and broadly based on the equal development of all the human faculties—a Literature, furthermore, of which the Latin branch breathed, in every line, of that distant national greatness to a sense of which, in the previous century, the friend of Petrarch, Cola di Rienzo, had sought not vainly to kindle and inflame his countrymen—a revulsion, long prepared, was operated amongst the Italian people, and from one end of the land to the other a thrill, as of a newly awakened life, ran through them, stirring within them as the sap stirs within the wintry trees under the first mild sweet breath of spring.

But not Ancient Literature alone roused them to a new consciousness and a feverish emulation ; fragments of Antique Statuary, few as yet, but sufficient, were exhumed under their wondering eyes, and, behold, the frame of man, that tene-ment of clay which they had been taught till now to regard as a thing to be mortified and held in



contempt, suddenly arose before them in a new-born dignity, transformed by an ideal—their shame no longer, but their pride. So, under the influence of this awakening, this Renaissance as we call it, Art, like Letters, put on a new physiognomy; with the vindication of human nature and the newly accepted view of life as a thing wherein to rejoice, the forms in which life reveals itself became a source of absorbing interest, and a worthy subject of study for their beauty's sake.

The young scientific spirit which at the same time flamed up in a very passion of enthusiasm came powerfully to the aid of the artist. The study of Anatomy emerged from its hiding-places, and was practised in the open day; Perspective was eagerly studied, and exercised on the minds of artists a fascination which, in our day, seems strange enough, obtruding its problems every now and then in their works in the most unexpected and naïvely far-fetched ways. A more healthful cast of Beauty was by degrees developed, and we thus see Art gradually expanding, and rising to a fuller dignity and a loftier level, through causes wholly foreign to, and not coincident with, religious growth. In fact, with the rising tide of the humanistic and scientific spirit the religious spirit was not gaining in strength and fervour; on the contrary, the powerful revulsion of feeling of which we have just noted the effects in the world of the intellect and of the imagination,

operated also, as might have been expected, on the beliefs of the cultivated masses, and loosened the hold on them of that religious teaching which men could not dissociate in their minds from the intellectual thralldom in which the Church had hitherto sought to hold them. The cause of Morality undoubtedly suffered with that of doctrinal Religion, and those who value most highly the precious boon conferred on the world by Italy in the fifteenth century cannot but recognise with sorrow that it came alloyed with much dross, and touched with much taint of corruption. So low was the moral tone of a large number of the Humanists, that we recall with a sense of relief as well as of gratitude the names of such men, for instance, as Vittorino da Feltre, Guarino, the countryman of Catullus, Giannozzo Manetti, Pomponio Leto, or Pico della Mirandola, in whom wisdom and learning went hand in hand with every Christian virtue.

And if it be not true that Italian Art owed its highest unfolding to the impulse of Religion, and the purifying atmosphere of Faith, neither is it true that its decadence was the result of the waning of Faith and Religion to which I have just alluded. Nor was it coincident with it in point of time: nay, that malarious moral taint which hung about the footsteps of the Renaissance in the day of its complete ascendancy, and polluted so much of its Literature, is not traceable—and then in a far less degree—till a century later

in the plastic Arts; so purifying, I had almost said so antiseptic, are those arts in their very nature, and in their influences.

Indeed, the causes of the downward tendency of Art towards the close of the sixteenth century must be sought less in the failing of the religious faith among artists than in the excessive and too exclusive faith in mere Science. Artists had now drunk deeply of the springs of knowledge, and were intoxicated in the strength of this rich new vintage; they had investigated the wondrous mechanism of the human frame, with a scientific thoroughness never till then brought to bear upon it; they had explored the science of composition, and measured the expressional resources of abstract Form; but they too often forgot that the province of Art is to speak to the emotional sense, not to make vain exhibition of acquired knowledge, and that work which reveals in the workman no impulse warmer or higher than vanity, or a thirst for display, will for ever fail to move the hearts of men.

Accordingly, the gradual supersession of sentiment by scientific pedantry marks faithfully the decline in sterling artistic nobility. Correggio, who indeed still rides on the crest of this great wave of Art, combines no doubt a true artistic passion with the most consummate knowledge, but we seem conscious in him already of the last moment of perilous poise; in the Caraccis and their School, pedantry too often triumphs; in

Tiepolo, the last of the Venetians, the acrobat lurks everywhere in the man of genius.

I have, in the foregoing remarks on Italian Art, turned my attention to Painting exclusively; I have done so because, just as Sculpture is in an emphatic manner the characteristic expression of the Greeks, so Painting was pre-eminently the Art of the Italians; and because, further, the upholders of the didactic theory lean habitually more on the Painting of Italy than on her Sculpture. Nevertheless, the growth of that Art on Italian soil, fed as it was from the same sources, fostered by the same influences, and breathing the same intellectual and moral air, followed the same course as Painting, and though it culminated in the hands of a man as sternly religious as his great spiritual predecessor, Dante, in the main the plastic Art rose on the same pinions, flew with the same flight, and fell at last stifled in the same lethal fumes as did her sister Painting.

One word concerning Greece before leaving this part of our subject; since Greece, too, is, as I said, not infrequently quoted in support of the views I am combating to-night.

We are tempted, when the bearing of Religion on Greek Art is pressed upon us, to ask which Religion is here alluded to; for in Greece, as elsewhere in the heathen world, there was a Religion of the few, the purer and the more abstract, and the Religion of the many, the more tangible and the less pure; the faith in one

supreme God, great amongst all gods, free from sin, and wholly unlike men ; or the faith in that joyous fellowship of gods and goddesses, loving and hating, scheming and boasting, founders of dynasties on the earth, whom the Greek race, if it borrowed the first conception of them from far-off ancestors in a dimly remembered East, had finally moulded, as was their nature, after their own living likeness and image. Of the former, however strong the impress with which it has stamped the Poetry of Greece, it would be difficult to show its direct influence on the plastic Arts. It seems to me to be far-fetched in the extreme to trace any definite ethical purpose or high religious character even in those sculptures, the noblest of all known to us and unapproached as yet in their lonely greatness, which have come down to us under the name of Phidias.

Of the popular religion of Greece, it would perhaps be safer to say that it owed much to Art, than that Art was strongly influenced by it. The gods as they were conceived by the masses, were in the main the embodiment of that exuberant sense of life and that overmastering love of Beauty, which was the distinctive privilege of their race no less than the life-breath of their Art.

In sum, then, we may, I think, say that, as far as we have seen, a cursory glance at a few of the points adduced in evidence for the didactic theory does not seem to justify the use made of them, and

rather shows us Art not, in truth, uninfluenced by the moral characteristics of those who practise it, but withal growing its own growth as a distinct organism with its own principles of life, and fed by conditions in which intellectual, moral, and physical causes each play their appointed part.

But if the illustrations by which it is sought to buttress this theory do not in fact uphold it, let us see how it stands with the doctrine itself viewed on its own intrinsic merits.

Now the reasoning on which the didactic theory is built up would seem to be this : the moral sense is the highest attribute and the distinctive appanage of man ; its strengthening must therefore be man's noblest aim, and the dignity of all human intellectual achievement must be according to the degree in which this end is primarily and professedly subserved by it.

But here a difficulty at once meets us ; for the consistent application of these views involves, amongst other consequences, one in which we may, I venture to think, see the *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole theory ; it involves the dethronement of an Art closely akin in many ways to those we follow, like them a language common to all races, like them from Time immemorial a channel of purest emotion, an Art divine, if a divine Art there be : the Art of Music. The dignity of Music has indeed, strange though it may seem, not remained unchallenged ; such heresies may, however, safely be left to their own foolishness.

It is given to the supreme few who occupy the solitary mountain-tops of Fame to be able to express, without incurring the charge of vanity, their high consciousness of the value to the world of the gifts they bestow upon it ; one of these few was Beethoven, and his proud words are there to show us in what esteem he, at least, held the power of the Art on which he has risen to immortality : " He to whom my music reveals its whole significance is lifted up," these are his words, " is lifted up above all the sorrow of the world." And assuredly the Art which has borne up, and daily bears up, in oblivious ecstasy so many weary souls, which has lulled and cheated if only for a moment so many aching hearts, and which in its endless plasticity has a response for every mood of the imagination and a voice for every phase of feeling, is rooted too deeply in the general love and reverence to fear the onslaughts of any logic-ridden crochet-monger. Yet, let me ask, what definite moral truth is taught by it with all its universality? What ethical proposition can it convey? What teaching or exhortation is in its voice? None, absolutely none.

Meanwhile we may safely affirm that a doctrine which should lead in its logical application to the exclusion of this Art from the first rank amongst the intellectual agents which raise mankind is tainted with grave fallacies. What, then, are these fallacies? They are, I think, the following : first, the assumption that the pursuit of moral

edification can alone confer a claim to the respect of men ; secondly, the assumption that moral edification can attach only to direct moral teaching ; and thirdly, the assumption that any mode of expression by which appeal is made to the emotional faculty and the imagination can be exercising its highest office except in the application and development of its own distinctive resources, and in seeking to convey those emotions of which it is the proper and especial vehicle. And this last fallacy lies at the root of the matter.

Now the language of Art is not the appointed vehicle of ethic truths ; of these, as of all knowledge as distinct from emotion, though not necessarily separated from it, the obvious and only fitted vehicle is speech, written or spoken—words, the symbols of ideas. The simplest spoken homily, if sincere in spirit and lofty in tone, will have more direct didactic efficacy than all the works of all the most pious painters and sculptors from Giotto to Michael Angelo, more than the Passion Music of Bach, more than a Requiem by Cherubini, more than an Oratorio of Handel.

It is not, then, it cannot be the foremost duty of Art to seek to embody that which it cannot adequately present, and to enter into a competition in which it is doomed to inevitable defeat.

On the other hand, there is a field in which she has no rival. We have within us the faculty for a range of emotions of vast compass, of exquisite



subtlety, and of irresistible force, to which Art and Art alone amongst human forms of expression has a key ; these then, and no others, are the chords which it is her appointed duty to strike ; and Form, Colour, and the contrasts of Light and Shade are the agents through which it is given to her to set them in motion. Her duty is, therefore, to awaken those sensations directly emotional and indirectly intellectual which can be communicated only through the sense of sight, to the delight of which she has primarily to minister. And the dignity of these sensations lies in this, that they are inseparably connected by association of ideas, with a range of perceptions and feelings of infinite variety and scope. They come fraught with dim complex memories of all the ever-shifting spectacle of inanimate Creation, and of the more deeply stirring phenomena of Life ; of the storm and the lull, the splendour and the darkness of the outer world ; of the storm and the lull, the splendour and the darkness of the changeful and transitory lives of men. Nay, so closely overlaid is the simple æsthetic sensation with elements of ethic or intellectual emotion by these constant and manifold accretions of associated ideas, that it is difficult to conceive of it independently of this precious overgrowth.

I cannot here enter at any length on this most interesting subject, but a moment's reflection will furnish you with illustrations of it. You will find, for instance, that, through this operation of

Association, lines and forms and combinations of lines and forms, colours and combinations of colours have acquired a distinct expressional significance, and, so to speak, an *ethos* of their own, and will convey, in the one province, notions of strength, of repose, of solidity, of flowing motion and of life, in the other sensations of joy or of sadness, of heat or of cold, of languor or of health.

It is this intensification of the simple æsthetic sensation through ethic and intellectual suggestiveness that gives to the Arts of Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting so powerful, so deep, and so mysterious a hold on the imagination. And here also we find the answer to the second of those fallacies to which I just now alluded ; to wit, that moral edification can attach only to direct moral teaching.

The most sensitively religious mind may indeed rest satisfied in the consciousness that it is not on the wings of abstract thought alone that we rise to the highest moods of contemplation, or to the most chastened moral temper ; and assuredly Arts which have for their chief task to reveal the inmost springs of Beauty in the created world, to display all the pomp of the teeming earth and all the pageant of those heavens of which we are told that they declare the Glory of God, are not the least eloquent witnesses to the might and to the Majesty of the mysterious and eternal Fountain of all good things.

We should thus find ourselves abundantly

armed, were it needful to be so armed, to Art those who affirm that to convey moral edification can alone give the highest status to an intellectual pursuit. But we have no need of defence against a fallacy so palpable, a fallacy of which the adoption contains the disparagement of every form of pure Science with all its marvellous achievements—achievements more marvellous than the dreams of Fancy, and in their results unspeakably beneficent. On the absurdity of such an attitude it is needless to dwell.

In fact, the nature of man is a complex organism in which are many and various germs of growth, and only in the full and balanced development of these several elements can that organism achieve in this world its perfect maturity. To Art belongs the development of one group of these rich and fruitful germs, a sufficient and, surely, no ignoble task.

Much would indeed remain to be said in further elucidation of this part of our subject, but the limits of my time warn me to draw to a close.

It remains to me to say, in conclusion, a few words on the bearing of the ethical tone of the Artist on his work and on his career.

At the beginning of this address I drew your attention to the fact that of those who claim for Art a separate and independent sphere—a claim which we have just seen to be founded and unassailable—many tend further to assert that, therefore, artistic production receives no colour from

Assoc lines a hav e moral temper of the producer. This I called dangerous error, and affirmed, on the contrary, that the man is stamped on his work, and his moral growth or lessening faithfully reflected in the sum of his labours. I believe this to be a cardinal truth, the disregard of which may bear fatal fruits in an Artist's life, and I have no warmer wish than to stir in you and leave with you, if it may be, to-night, some sense of the grave importance of its bearing upon each and all of us.

The more closely you consider this subject the more clearly will you feel, for instance, the mischief to us as Artists which must infallibly attend a tolerant indulgence within ourselves of certain moral weaknesses and failings to which nature is too often prone. Of these failings some are palpably ignoble and in the long run debasing ; others are not, on the surface, so evidently mischievous.

Amongst such as are palpably ignoble, I will instance the greed for gain. I believe no evil to be more insidious, none more unerring in its operation than this sordid appetite. Its poisonous taint creeps into the moral system ; numbs by degrees all finer sense ; dulls all higher vision ; is fatal to all lofty effort. No worse snare lies across our path.

Another such deadening taint is the vulgar thirst for noisy success, the hankering of vanity for immediate satisfaction ; of this the outcome is a deliberate sacrifice of the abiding appreciation

of the intelligent for the transitory and noisy clamour of the unintelligent and shallow, with the fatally sure result of a paralysis of the sense of self-respect, a lowering of standard and, in the end, an impotent disinclination for every sustained and serious effort.

Other failings there are of which, as I said, the bearing is not so immediately evident, but of which the dangers are scarcely less. As one instance of these I will quote the indulgence in a narrow, unsympathising spirit, a spirit ever awake to carp and to cavil, feeding its self-complacency on the disparagement of others. This spirit stunts and shrivels those who yield to it, and by blinding them more and more to the worth and Beauty that are in the work which is not their own, deprives them of the priceless stimulus of a noble emulation. Let me urge you to avoid this pitfall also, and rather to keep alive within you a generous temper, ever keen to see the good wherever it may be found, finding and fastening on it as by an instinct in the least promising surroundings, even as a divining rod strikes on the hidden spring under a parched and weary wilderness of sand; for of this temper you will gather the fruits tenfold in the work of your own hands.

And now, before closing, let me recapitulate the points on which, in this rapid and too summary glance at the bearing of Ethics on Art, we seem to have established our position.

We have laid down as an unassailable axiom

that the special function of a mode of expression is to convey those ideas, emotions, or impressions of which it is the fittest vehicle, and we have recognised that the proper vehicle of purely ethical ideas is Speech. Art, on the other hand, we said, being the proper and only channel for impressions of another order, namely, æsthetical impressions, cannot have for its highest duty the conveying of ethic truths. We saw, further, that though the impressions which it is the exclusive privilege, and therefore the proper function, of Art to convey, are primarily æsthetic, they are very complex in their nature, and receive an incalculable accession of strength through the operation of associated ideas ; and, again, we saw that these complex impressions, in which intellectual and ethical elements are thus added to the fundamental æsthetic sensation, having, like those stirred in us by Music, the power to raise us to the highest regions of poetic emotion, deserve to rank amongst the noblest delights of men.

And, lastly, we have seen that, whilst the inculcation of Moral and Religious truths must be admitted not to be the object of Art, as such, nor moral edification its appointed task, it is not therefore true, as some would have us believe, that the Artist's work is uninfluenced by his moral tone, but rather that the influence of that tone is, in fact, upon it, and controls it from the first touch of the brush or chisel to the last.

And once again, I say, I would fain stamp this

vital fact deeply in your minds. Believe me, whatever of dignity, whatever of strength we have within us will dignify and will make strong the labours of our hands; whatever littleness degrades our spirit will lessen them and drag them down. Whatever noble fire is in our hearts will burn also in our work, whatever purity is ours will chasten and exalt it; for as we are, so our work is, and what we sow in our lives, that, beyond a doubt, we shall reap for good or for ill in the strengthening or defacing of whatever gifts have fallen to our lot.

ADDRESS

DECEMBER 10TH, 1883





STUDENTS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

The subject on which two years ago, on a like occasion, I addressed you from this Chair was, you may remember, the Relation in which Art stands to Morality and to Religion. I shall ask you this evening to consider with me a subject not, I think, less interesting, namely, the relation of Artistic Production to the conditions of time and place under which it is evolved, and to the characteristics of the races to which it is due.

Do not be unduly alarmed at such a prospect. In the very vastness of the subject is your greatest safety ; for it is needless to say that the limits of our time, were there no other hindrance, will not suffer me to deal with more than a fragment of so wide a topic, or to present to you that fragment in other than baldest outline.

It will be enough if, by putting before you a few suggestive facts, I am able to quicken your interest in and to lead you to explore for yourselves a very fascinating and far-reaching field of thought. This is my sole and sufficient aim to-night.

If in your study of the works of Painting or of

Sculpture to which you have had access either in permanent galleries or in temporary Exhibitions, or of the numberless Architectural works at home and abroad which Photography brings within the reach of those to whom it is not given to travel, you have passed from the examination of individual examples to a more comprehensive consideration of the broad groups into which they fall according to the countries which have produced them, and to the period of their production, you cannot fail to have noticed the definite and distinctive physiognomy, the family air, as it has been well called, which marks these several groups ; and if, pursuing further this train of thought, you have endeavoured to penetrate the nature of this distinctive physiognomy, you have perhaps been led to note the harmony which, in each case, exists between it and the atmosphere, mental and moral, within which it took shape. This will have become equally clear to you whether you have compared, one with the other, the Art of different countries or the Art of different epochs. So, for instance, in passing from a work by Rubens to one by Velasquez the opulent splendour of the one and the concentrated gravity of the other will have, maybe, brought before you, more vividly than could many words, the deeply contrasted characteristics of national temper by which Nature had divided two peoples long united in unnatural bonds of political union—Spain and Flanders.

Or again, if in the comparison of the Ogival

Architecture of England with that of France or of Germany you have discovered in each school the expression of distinct national characteristics, you will have felt not less clearly in the contrast between the solemn and mystic gloom of a Northern Cathedral and the radiant serenity of a perfect Grecian Temple, the antithesis which exists between the Mediæval and the Hellenic World. And no doubt the sense will have grown upon you that this harmony between the work and its surroundings is not fortuitous, but rather that Art is an organism fed and formed by the same forces which shape the current of the general Spiritual Life, of which it is, indeed, but one amongst many forms of expression.

You may have observed, in the next place, how vitally one of the Arts especially, Architecture, is affected by the physical conditions of the country in which it is practised ; and lastly, in following the stream of Art to its remoter sources, you have perhaps been struck with its continuity and with the part played in its evolution by inheritance or by example ; from land to land, from age to age, you may have traced through their various vicissitudes certain recurring ideas and forms ; nay, if you have descended from the higher regions of Art to the humbler sphere of design which is called industrial, you will have found in more than one commonplace of contemporary decoration devices conceived dim ages ago in the land of the Pharaohs or on the plains of Shinar. So, for one

instance only, the not too formidable animal whose toothless and trunkless head seems to "roar ye an't were any nightingale" from the back of your armchair or on the handle of your teapot, and whose feet so fitly end the legs of your sofa or of your sideboard, has its prototype in carvings inspired on the quick in far Assyrian days, and is the last transmitted counterfeit of lions that once writhed on the spears or yawned round the golden throne of a Sargon or a Sennacherib.

Well, it is on these formative influences of surroundings in time and place, and of inheritance or example that I wish to say a few words to you to-night—mere suggestions, I repeat, of an outline which you may, if you so care, fill in at your leisure for yourselves.

But here a word of caution is necessary. The further you penetrate into this subject the more, I make no doubt, will you feel its fascination; but with this fascination will come also the risk of overrating or misinterpreting the bearing of each new fact that seems to throw light upon your investigations—the danger will arise of unconsciously fitting fact into theory, instead of testing theory by fact, and of forgetting, in the neatness of a chain of reasoning wrought from materials too partially selected, the darkness which shrouds, for all our seeking, the inmost springs of the æsthetic life in nations and in men. We must content ourselves, as we watch that life in its intermittent flow, with noting the affluents which feed it, the

banks which mould its current, and the elements which tinge its waters ; confessing that the initial forces which determine the hour and the place of its birth, and the times of its fulness and of its failing, remain indeed a mystery of which the key is still withheld from us.

The influences which determine the bent and growth of Art are these : first, and primarily, the temper and genius of a race ; then, the social and intellectual state of a community or nation at a given moment ; thirdly, example, whether by unbroken transmission of inheritance, by the resuscitation of a tradition, or through a stimulating contact with other nations ; and lastly, the influence, partly moral and partly material, of surrounding physical conditions.

These several agencies overlap, no doubt, as well as co-operate ; it is, however, if not strictly philosophical, convenient for our purpose to speak of them as separate.

Let us now endeavour to see them at work. It is evident that of these various influences the third, namely example by contact or inheritance, will be less and less perceptible as we ascend the stream of time. As we leave ever further behind us the complex life of modern nations with their unceasing interaction one on the other and that burden of intellectual inheritance which is not always an unmixed blessing to their Art, we see the problem of Growth becoming more simple, till we reach, at last, a period in which external impulses are all

but inappreciable, and in which Art, shaping itself closely on the wants and the conditions of the land and the people from which it springs, is the faithful and unalloyed expression of the genius of that people and the resources of that land.

Such a land we find on the banks of the Nile, and such a period in the unrecorded dawn of Egyptian civilisation. Here, at least, the problem of evolution is reduced to the simplest form known to us west of the cradle of our race, though not to the simplest form conceivable; for although one branch of Egyptian Art, Sculpture, had reached a very high—perhaps its highest—level between 3000 and 4000, or, according to Mariette and Maspero between 4000 and 5000 years before the Christian era, the Egyptians were not, it is believed, indigenous on the Nile.

For our present purposes, however, they may be considered practically a primitive race.

What manner of people were they? They were a people endowed with brilliant gifts, and of whom a prominent characteristic was their piety. "The Egyptians are religious," says Herodotus, "far beyond any other race of men." Piety was printed on all their works. They believed in an after life, and on that after life their thoughts were chiefly bent. They traced to the heavens the origin of their royal throne, and believed that in a far, unchronicled past the gods themselves had ruled within their land; the right hand of the immortals was extended over them in protection; their Pontiff-Kings visibly

represented the Godhead upon earth, and at their death were in their turn taken up into the heavenly ranks. They were a race which during long centuries—those early centuries in which its Arts took shape and ripened—grew up in unchallenged peace to strength and conscious greatness, knowing as yet no rivals, drinking in daily the deepening sense of a security unassailable and immemorial. Visibly favoured in a climate beyond example steadfast and serene, and in a soil lavish of every gift, they were above all made confident in the sight, generation after generation, of the ever-renewed blessing of the great stream in whose waters that soil was each autumn born anew ; and so to the sense of abidingness would add itself that of unexhausted wealth and plenty.

I said that they were pre-eminently pious—dwelling constantly in thought on the life of which the gate is Death. We need not enter here into their complex creed concerning the Soul and the Intelligence, the body and its double ; it is enough for us to note that in their belief a material form was needed after death, as a home and resting-place, until the day of doom, for that surviving “double,” that eidolon, which was an incorporeal counterpart of the body. To furnish this tenement for the double was, therefore, a sacred duty, and it was accordingly provided in two ways : first, by embalmment of the corpse itself, and, further, for the event of injury to the mummy, by the manufacture of stone or wooden counterfeits



made in its exact image—and for greater safety these were frequently very numerous.

Such, then, being the mental attitude and such the custom of a race with strong plastic and building instincts, what sort of Art should we look for in it? Should we not look for an Art in which the temples of the Gods and the abodes of the Dead were the most salient feature? And should we not further expect of such a people that whatever connected itself with the glorification of those Gods, or with the exaltation of earthly rulers scarcely less divine, or with the service of the departed, would be the inspiring motive of their graphic and plastic Art, as well as of their Architectural production? And this Art being an entirely spontaneous and sincere expression of the national temper, should it not convey to us a sense of strength, of dignity, of stability, and of repose? And would not the consciousness of unlimited resources find expression in a tendency to the excessive in size? Well, these are precisely the characteristics which we never fail to find in the monuments of Egypt, and in so much of her plastic Art as is not purely domestic in character and descriptive of private life.

Those whose fortune it has been to stand by the base of the Great Pyramid of Khoofoo and look up at its far summit flaming in the violet sky, or to gaze on the wreck of that solemn watcher of the rising sun, the giant Sphynx of Gizeh, erect, still, after sixty centuries, in the desert's slowly

rising tide, or who have rested in the shade of the huge shafts which tell of the pomp and splendour of hundred-gated Thebes, must, I think, have received impressions of majesty and of enduring strength which will not fade within their memory.

But if the general character of these monuments bears the impress of the moral temper of the Egyptian people, we shall find a special requirement of their faith exercising a direct and vital effect on the development of their sculpture and of their painting ; in the case of the former first for good, and afterwards, indirectly, for mischief. I mean the duty, which as I have told you they held sacred, of supplementing the embalmed corpses in the tombs with images of the deceased in stone or wood. Out of this duty arose necessarily a vast activity in the field of sculpture ; but the object of the Artist was to produce, I said, in these images, an exact counterfeit of the outward form and features of the departed, in order that the second life—the life in the shadow of the tomb—might mimic as faithfully as possible the old life in the light of day ; and the result was, as might be expected, a remarkable development of individualisation in treatment of form and figure ; in fact, a vigorous and uncompromising school of portraiture. This view of the causes which influenced Egyptian Sculpture in its origin is very lucidly set forth in the admirable work of Messrs. Perrot and Chipiez, which I commend to your study, and in which

you will find it supported by a series of most excellent illustrations.

Whilst, however, so large a demand for works of sculpture had a very stimulating and at first a very wholesome effect on plastic Art, the very extent of that demand became eventually a source of harm, and we may safely attribute to it some not small share of the stagnation and eventual decline of this branch of Art on the banks of the Nile. For in exact proportion to the necessity for rapid and almost unlimited production would the obstacles to thoughtful treatment and a close study of Nature increase; the Sculptor would fatally tend to become a mere manufacturer and purveyor, and, in the speed to which he was compelled, life and character would more and more surely disappear from his work. Be this as it may, we see in Egypt this strange thing, that the earliest efforts of sculpture which have come down to us are in general the best. Certain wooden panels, for instance, carved in low relief, which are preserved at Boulaq and which display a delicacy of workmanship and a spontaneity of treatment seldom equalled in Egyptian Art, are believed by Monsieur Maspero, under whose guidance I had the good fortune to see them, to date back to the third dynasty; that is to say, to over forty centuries before the Christian era. And the qualities which distinguish the most perfect phase of this Art are precisely a subtler perception of individuality and a more unreserved

obedience to Nature than we see at any subsequent period.

Our acquaintance with this epoch of Egyptian Art is of very recent date, and it had been till quite lately much the custom to take an exaggerated view of the stagnancy of Egyptian Sculpture to which I just now alluded. A truer appreciation both of the achievements of that Art, and of the phases through which it passed, is now beginning to prevail ; meanwhile we must, I think, be on our guard lest we now fall into an opposite error, ignoring unduly the limitations from which the Sculpture of Egypt never freed itself, and forgetting that if in fifty times a hundred years it underwent marked and considerable modifications, those changes did not bring improvement with them after a certain early period. Of this arrested growth the causes must in great part remain obscure ; the explanation which I have suggested, and of which I would not overrate the bearing, applies only to funereal Art ; and though, no doubt, the whole current of plastic production would be affected by the vicissitudes of its main affluent, we must look for other causes to account for the strange and pulseless monotony which we see in the treatment of the statues of the Gods.

One of these Monsieur Perrot is inclined to seek in the necessity imposed on the Artist of representing those Gods as a monstrous compound of man and beast, a necessity which shut him out from any inspiring ideal ; much, again, of the

absence of action in Egyptian statues, and of the empty smoothness which so often characterises their modelling, he attributes to the extreme hardness of the material in which they are habitually wrought, and which, while lending itself to a high polish, was extremely difficult to carve. To these causes we may add the absence of any fecundating contact with other races. But behind and beyond them all we must recognise as the primary agent a certain peculiarity and inertness of the race, a narrow but tenacious spirit, of which, whatever may be its sources, we find the perfect counterpart only in the great Turanian Empire of the East, the not less ancient land of China.

I could have wished to say also in this place a word on the harmony which exists between Egyptian building and the scenery in which it is set, but for this, time leaves me no leisure ; I have yet, before passing to other lands, to glance briefly at Egyptian Painting.

Of this our knowledge is drawn, wholly, from the tombs. Like Sculpture, it owed its chief impulse to the views of the Egyptians in regard to a suspended life within the grave ; for not only were meat and drink laid for their sustenance before the dead, but, just as to the mummy were added supplementary semblances of the body, so also was the painted semblance of food placed about it in its long abode ; nay more, as the ghostly inmate could no longer wander forth into the world, the world was piously brought in effigy to him in the

tomb, and on the walls around him he saw unfolded each scene of daily and domestic life, in the sight of which he might once more seem to himself to sow and to reap, to count his hoarded gain, to carouse, and to rehearse in all things his vanished earthly days. Here, more than elsewhere, we find the Egyptian Artist untrammelled by material, and we are accordingly struck with an increased vivacity of dramatic treatment and the greater freedom with which he handles the human form ; here, too, we note a certain cheerful *bon-homie* which was a characteristic of the race. I have spoken of these designs as paintings, but they would be more accurately described as outlines filled in with colour ; for throughout Egyptian Art colour appears solely as a flat tint. It is a prevalent opinion that the Egyptians were colorists, skilful harmonisers, that is, of subtle tints. In this opinion, though not unmindful of the harmonious effect of some of their enamels, in which the original tints are still preserved, I find some difficulty in concurring ; faded and bleached by the sun, the coloured hieroglyphs which still enliven some of their buildings are no doubt very delightful in their play of tones, and to many paintings on papyri, or on mummy cases, decay or golden resins have given the delicacy of fresco or a glow as of mosaics ; but the sight of well-preserved paintings of comparatively recent discovery has left grave doubts in my mind in regard to the coloristic aptitudes of the people which produced

them. This, however, is worthy of notice, that we see in Egyptian Painting the first use of that combination of green and blue which was to be the dominant note of so much that is most beautiful in Eastern coloured decoration.

Next to Egyptian Art in order of antiquity and closely connected with it, is that of the two great Semitic empires which had their seat by the waters of the Tigris and the Euphrates : to these I now turn.

And here a perplexity awaits us ; we have learnt to think of the Semitic race as marked out scarcely more by its monotheism than by its lack of gift for the plastic Arts. Void of artistic impulse, the Jews, we know, saw in the second commandment not only a warning against idolatrous worship, but a distinct decree of the Almighty against the production of graven images even for purposes of teaching or of delight.

Renan, in his "History of the Semitic Languages," says on this subject much that is suggestive and interesting. "The desert," he writes, "is monotheistic ; sublime in its immense uniformity, it revealed to man the idea of the Infinite, but not the sense of an incessant creative activity which more fertile regions breathed into other races." "Nature," he adds elsewhere, of the Jew, "had little place in his thoughts" ; and further on : "Music, the subjective Art *par excellence*, is the only one he knew." It is to a brooding and introspective habit of mind that he

attributes the absence in this race of any craving for plastic expression, which is, we know, in its essence a desire to recall sensations aroused by outward objects.

Here then is our perplexity: for if, turning from the Jews, we look to their kindred Semites in their own ancestral Chaldea, we see them under skies as broad and in more unbroken plains, amidst pursuits, too, originally similar, moulded to a temper wholly different; to them the wilderness was not monotheistic, to them the sky's unclouded span brought no lesson of one Lord, supreme and solitary; it led them rather to the complex science of the stars, and to that belief in their influence over the destinies of men which has played so great a part in the annals of mankind; and finally we see them evolving in due course an Art full of power and of objective vitality, an Art of which the fruitful seeds were to fall one day on the lap of Greece herself. These, I say, are perplexing facts, and show with what caution we must, even at this early stage of the world's history, handle the ethnological test. Their partial explanation we must no doubt seek in the fact that the Jews were of far more unmixed Semitic blood than were the Chaldeans and Assyrians, who are, when first we meet them, already blended with an Accadian, that is to say a Turanian stock. Meanwhile, we shall not find on closer inspection that the landmarks of race have been as wholly removed as might at first sight



seem ; and the foremost sign of this is the complete absence amongst this Semitic folk, in Assyria at least, of the monumental tomb—the outward mark of the absorbing prominence of the subject of death in the Turanian mind ; and we shall further find that striking as are the achievements of the sculptors of Nineveh, those artists did not practically get beyond the carving of flat surfaces, and that nothing in the shape of an Assyrian or Chaldean statue has come down to us for which any serious merit can be claimed. The more than summary sketchiness which is imposed upon me forbids my dealing separately with Chaldean and Assyrian Art ; it will suffice to say that if the fortune of war gave alternate supremacy to Babylon and to Nineveh, the Art of the two nations was practically one growth ; we may note, too, that as power gravitated from the gentler Chaldean to his ruder brother in the North, the religious spirit of the former yielded to the warlike genius of the latter, and whilst what remains to us of the first Chaldean empire is of a religious character, the architecture of Assyria is mainly palatial and expressive of the power of a ruthless race of kings ; for Assyria in the days of its greatness was as a vast camp spread about the throne of a fighting monarch, and the Assyrians a breed of warriors fierce and without fear, casting down their enemies, in the words of Isaiah, “as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm.” And the pride of splendour, too, was strong within

them. Would you see an Assyrian king in all his love of luxury and in his lust of blood? Then look where Assur-ban-habal sits with his queen, carved on an alabaster slab now in the British Museum. Amongst the palm-trees of the Royal Gardens, his weapons laid aside, but at hand; he reclines on a sumptuous couch, curiously wrought, and spread with stuffs from the famous looms of Babylon; opposite to him, on a throne, sits the queen; each of them has taken, from a dainty table which divides them, a cup of wine, and is about to drink; the feast is spread in the chequered shadow of a vine, for the sun is fierce overhead, and attendants placed at each end of the couch strive with long fans to simulate a breeze; the birds seek refuge in the branches; minstrels are not wanting, and the sound of harps thrills through the summer stillness; over all a drowsy peace. And now look closer; on what is the great king gazing across the bubbles of his wine? Not at the golden date-palms, not at the purple grapes, not at the simmering plain, not at the sky's blue tent—not even, I fear, on the features of the queen. His eye rests, in placid contemplation, upon an object hung full in view on a bough before him, the sweetest sight of all; a ghastly fruit plucked newly from its trunk: his enemy's hated head, dangling, dishonoured, upside down!

With such a people and with such a line of kings, what artistic expression shall we look to

find? We shall look for an Art masculine and somewhat truculent, in which the prowess of the sovereign in war and in the chase—for were not the sons of Nimrod great huntsmen before the Lord?—shall be the leading theme : official annals, so to speak, of high royal deeds ; we shall expect no domestic subjects, none of the quaint idylls of homely life which the Egyptians loved even after they, too, had begun to blazon butchery on their walls—few scenes prompted by piety. And such is, in fact, the Art we find ; and the execution of it is strikingly expressive of its spirit, for the hand of the Artist found in the yielding alabaster in which he mainly worked, a fitting substance wherein to plough and hack the thews and sinews which he loved to mark with such uncompromising vigour. And, here, in comparing the grim accentuation of these Assyrian sculptures with the vacant polish of so many images of Egyptian workmanship, in which the limbs remain engaged within the granite block, you will do well again to note the bearing of material on the development of Art in early days.

I alluded just now to the royal hunting pieces in the Assyrian sculptures. That these should be good was natural in a people passionately fond of sport ; but it is not easy to account for the immeasurably greater dramatic insight here displayed in the representation of wild beasts than in the rendering of the human form ; in all essentials I know nothing quite equal to the portrayal by Assyrian artists of

lions maddened or struck down in the chase. Their lesser skill in the treatment of human beings has, indeed, been attributed to the fact that they never saw their subjects except closely draped from head to foot ; but this explanation, though ingenious, seems to me wholly inadequate, and we must in this case, as in so many others, be content to wonder in doubt and ignorance.

One word on Assyrian Architecture, in so far as it touches our subject of to-night. Stone, if not in great quantities, was accessible to the builders of Nineveh ; nevertheless, they built in brick, for their Architecture, like all their Art, had its origin in Chaldea—that is, in a country where there was no stone, but where, on the other hand, clay abounded for the making of bricks and tiles. Meanwhile the broad and empty surfaces of their buildings, surfaces almost wholly unrelieved by mouldings—for this form of enrichment did not, with such a material, readily suggest itself in so early a stage of Art—required profuse adornment to satisfy Assyrian love of splendour and to be worthy of Chaldean tradition ; here stone found its opportunity ; and soon colossal monsters, human headed, but limbed like a bull and winged—types of strength and wisdom—took post at gateways and approaches, whilst long lines of sculptured frieze ran, level with the eye, along the interminable walls. To this enrichment of the ground line of their palaces the use of stone by the Assyrians was limited ; above this line another

mode of adornment was chiefly used, namely, a casing of glazed and coloured tiles ; wherein you see the origin of that marvellous decoration which to this day in the same regions throws its enchantment over fields of wall-space hardly less flat and free from moulded features. For internal embellishment and for detached structural supports Assyria had wood and metal, a combination, indeed, which lies at the origin of all decorated columnar forms ; of such piers or columns material evidence no longer exists except it be in charred fragments, but other reasons besides structural requirements would suffice to convince us that they had existed. In the first place, as is acutely argued by Mr. Fergusson in his most suggestive and valuable work on Architecture, it is no doubt of these supports that we see the reproduction in stone in the wholly borrowed Art of Persia ; secondly, their use in tents and ædicules, and as a decorative feature in windows, practically involves their application to a more important function ; and, lastly, the deep influence on Ionic Art of this amongst many Assyrian forms implies in itself its large and general use. Thus this architectural feature, which attains its highest beauty of abstract form in the porch of the Erechtheum, has for its first rude ancestor a cedar pole and a curl or two of copper.

Two or three more points may be noted here in passing : the first is that Astronomy determined the shape and colour of one type of Assyrian

Temples—Temples which were also Observatories. Their stories were seven in number, the sacred seven; and each story bore the colour proper to one of the heavenly spheres. Another is, that in Assyria we for the first time see the Arch used as an important decorative and decorated feature. Another, that we first discover in an Assyrian bas-relief an instance of a new constructive feature—the gabled roof.

In Egypt and in the Mesopotamian kingdoms we have seen two forms of Art, akin in some respects but nevertheless separate and individual, both bearing strongly the stamp of the race, the country, and the times which gave them to the world, both marked by a strange inertness and persistency. Let us now look, for a moment, and in conclusion, at an Art in which whatever was best in them rose to a fuller and nobler life, an Art which we can compare no longer to a broad and sluggish stream, but which is as the sudden upleaping of a living source, reflecting and scattering abroad the light of a new and a more joyous day; a spring at which men shall drink to the end of all days and not be sated: the Art of Greece.

Nothing that I am aware of in the history of the human intelligence is for a moment comparable to the dazzling swiftness of the ripening of Greek Art in the fifth century before Christ; and we marvel at it the more from the contrast it presents to the secular torpors of the races from which it drew its alphabet. I fear, too, that when we have

ascribed this lightning speed of growth to a peculiarly happy balance and interaction of various elements of race and to not less favouring circumstances of place and time, we shall not have gone far on the road to understanding it ; and we shall perhaps here more vividly than ever feel our ignorance of the mysterious affinities—the occult Chemistry of Nature, if I may so call it—through which certain racial ingredients produce in varying combinations results so strangely different.

Nevertheless, it will not be without interest to apply for a moment to this evolution the same methods of inquiry which have guided us hitherto this evening. The earliest historic records of Greece are but recent as compared with those of Egypt or of Chaldea, and it is only in occasional glimpses that we discern the footprints of civilisation in this chosen land during the obscure centuries which preceded the Dorian invasion, or indeed, as far as Art is concerned, the Era of the Olympiads. Looking back to the age in which we first descry them, we find the land occupied by a race which we call Pelasgic, and which seems to have held not only all the lands washed by the Ægean from Lydia to Cape Tænaron, but to have pushed round the head of the Adriatic and spread itself out over Italy. This race was, perhaps, the earliest wave poured by the Aryan tide from Asia into Europe ; but it preceded the later immigrants into Greece by such an interval as to form a very distinct stock ; and, whether or not by an assimi-

tion with earlier occupants of the soil, they appear before us in the three lands with certain of the attributes of a Turanian people : that is to say, as mighty builders, and notably builders of tombs. They were followed on the scene by a purer Aryan race which, descending from the Phrygian heights to settle first on the western skirts of Asia Minor, overflowed towards the fifteenth century in all directions, southward even to Egypt, but especially westward, by the islands, to Greece, there so blending with the Pelasgic stock that they soon learn to boast themselves Autochthons. Lastly, another offshoot of the same family, after making its way across the Hellespont to settle in the Thessalian Highlands, burst forth in the eleventh century and swept, conquering, over the land. These two races, akin in origin, and yet profoundly unlike, were known as the Ionian and Dorian peoples ; and their rivalry is the history of Greece.

Of the earlier Pelasgic or Pelasgo-Ionic race few, but important, vestiges are preserved to us, the most remarkable being sepulchral monuments such as the tombs, or so-called Treasure-houses, of Orchomenos and Mycenæ ; walls, also, and gateways, of massive style and masonry, reveal them to us as a great building people : and in all these remains we trace a distinct Assyrian influence, either due to the Ionians themselves, or to Phœnician middlemen, or, perhaps, to both.

With the rule of the Dorians a complete para-



lysis seems to have fallen on the artistic life of the country as far as Architecture is concerned, and to have held it in abeyance for several centuries ; whether or not this lethargy is directly attributable to the genius of the dominant race—a race of soldiers and of lawgivers, and averse to Art—it is difficult to say ; this much, however, is beyond doubt, that although the Dorians made their own and gave their name to a style of architecture without a rival for dignity of chastened form, in the region in which their race and spirit were more than elsewhere seen pure and paramount—the Spartan State—the Arts, if we except martial music, had absolutely no existence ; and it is, therefore, the more difficult to evade the conviction, combated though it has been by weighty opinion, that the Doric style was not of Doric origin, but was indeed in great measure borrowed, about the days of Psammetik, or earlier, from prototypes still seen at Karnak and at Beni-Hassan. However this may be, when Greece emerges at last into historic light we find her Building Art born, so to speak, anew ; of the old Pelasgic form we see no trace, but in its place two stately styles—the one, indeed, Asiatic, and the other Egyptian in its aspect, but, both, purified and made nobler in the alembic of the new Greek spirit.

And here we may note in passing an interesting circumstance which had much bearing on the plastic Art of Greece : in the slow welding process from which resulted that perfect poise of

intellectual and bodily gifts which we associate with the Greek name, the elements of race seem to have distributed themselves differently in the spiritual and in the physical order ; for whilst in the former the Aryan type was strongly modified, it prevailed wholly in the latter ; in the Art of the Periclean age, of which the high truthfulness was one of its noblest attributes, no vestige survives of the Pelasgic type, as we see it, for instance, in Etruscan Art, or where its last trace lingers on the marbles of Ægina—a tradition, perhaps, even there, rather than a record ; in its stead we find a new ideal of balanced form wholly Aryan, and of which the only parallel I know is sometimes found in the women of another Aryan race—your own.

But if the Greek spirit is, as I said, the outcome of a subtle balance and interaction of various elements of race, let us see how far Art, which is perhaps its most characteristic outcome, was further favoured by external circumstances.

And first a word or two of the land. Let us look at the map. Here are no vast alluvial plains such as those along which, in the East, whole empires surged to and fro in the throng of battle ; no mighty flood of rivers, no towering mountain walls ; instead, a tract of moderate size ; a fretted promontory thrust out into the sea—far out, and flinging across the blue a multitude of purple isles and islets towards the Ionian, kindred, shores. In scale nothing excessive ; everywhere measure and moderation. And of this sobriety which is equally

removed from all extremes, this *μηδὲν ἄγαν* which is the keynote of all things Greek, you find no completer type than in the famous little land where Athens rose and reigned. Spread out to the sun within a girdle of nobly simple heights, and sweeping gently to the sea to catch the western breeze, it was blessed in an atmosphere of which you must have felt the breath to understand its penetrating sweetness. Attica was not in those times parched and thirsty as we see it now ; the dusty olive groves which to-day are white along the arid track where Kephissus should flow are not the "thousand fruited" bowers ringing with the nightingale, of which Sophocles sang so lovingly : nevertheless, as compared, for instance, with Southern Italy, Athens was not exceptionally favoured in her soil. It was a soil liberal but not lavish, demanding labour but rewarding it—a fit surrounding for a joyous, wholesome, active life.

Such was the Greek land. On this land we have a race built up as we just now saw, and whose religion was rooted partly in Ancestor worship, but mainly in the worship of the personified forces and phenomena of Nature ; distinctively, it was a race whose dominant thought was not Death but Life, an intense Life in which Gods and Goddesses shared, but with a higher and ampler vital energy ; for these Gods, whom they made in their own image, however Xenophanes might chide, walked freely among them, mixing in

human affairs, met at every turn, each the ideal of a particular type. Behind these bright divinities, dimly seen, the Moiræ loomed, asserting and embodying those instincts of Order and inexorable Law which found such noble utterance in the mouth of Æschylus.

And this race, very limited in numbers, was further divided into yet smaller communities; when we think, for instance, of Athens, with which our chief concern is, the idea of multitude never presents itself to our minds; we think of a handful of free men; and indeed restriction of numbers was part of its own ideal of the perfect state.

Now, a first result of these moderate numbers would be the increase in dignity and importance of the unit; and, given, of course, the peculiar intellectual vivacity of the race, we should be prepared to see for the first time in history the spectacle of a free State, and of that only true conception of such a State which associates its collective greatness with the worth of the individual citizen. Out of this conception a race, enamoured in a manner till then undreamt of with the pursuit of ideas for their own sake, would be led to form an ideal of a citizen who, whilst he should be merged in the State in which he is a living force, should render himself worthy to serve it by the fullest and most evenly balanced development of his being in all its varied capabilities; and this full and evenly-balanced development we see in Athens. How Athenian education was based on

this ideal you know ; you know that a noble training of the body went hand in hand with the discipline of the mind ; you know how high a place was assigned to athletic sports, and that an athlete three times crowned had claim to the public tribute of a statue. And you have learnt what was in the eyes of Greeks the dignity of that bodily frame, which they shared with the Gods themselves—a body not, in their simple view of life, at war with the spirit, but working harmoniously with it towards one common central ideal of perfection.

Now, the bearing of these things upon our train of thought has not escaped you ; you have felt, no doubt, that in a society so constituted and so composed, Art, but more especially the Sculptor's Art, would find a favouring atmosphere such as had never before existed nor can ever exist again. You understand in it the abundance and high level of production, and do not wonder at the multitude of statues which thronged the Altis and the precincts of holy Delphi. And you feel perhaps with fresh force how faithfully in its nobility and its serenity, in its exquisite balance, in its searching after truth, and in its thirst for the Ideal, Greek Sculpture mirrored at its best the Mind of Greece. That these attributes were not less conspicuous in Grecian Painting we may confidently assume, however limited and indirect our knowledge of it is. It is, perhaps, in that painted earthenware which has been preserved to us in such profusion, chiefly in Etruscan tombs, that we waylay the

Greek draughtsman in his most spontaneous mood. I need not remind you how inexpressible a charm his simplicity, his sincerity, and his unfailing dignity of vision have cast over these precious relics which we have gathered at the hands and in the homes of the dead.

And here I must, for the present, leave the subject of which I have to-night roughly sketched the outline of a fragment—to resume it, perhaps, at some future time.

I have brought you to the culminating point of Art in Ancient days, the loftiest in many respects to which it has ever risen, and in following its course through various lands have endeavoured to illustrate, as I had promised, its organic connection with the temper of the times and of the races which have produced it. In doing so I have sought only to interest you, I have aimed at no moral lesson ; nevertheless, it may be well, in taking leave of the Art of Greece, to remember that if of the attributes which went to make it supreme some are indeed beyond the control of men, two, and not the least bright, are within the reach of all : Simplicity, I mean, and Truth.



ADDRESS

DECEMBER 10TH, 1885





STUDENTS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,


I propose to resume this evening, where I relinquished them just two years ago, the threads of an inquiry in which I sought at that time, and from this place, to enlist your interest. In doing so I cannot but feel that I am placing you at some disadvantage. Many of those whom I now see before me were no doubt present at our last biennial celebration ; others, and not a few, are here to-day for the first time. In the minds of the former the words to which they listened on that occasion linger, I fear, if at all, as dim and faded memories ; to the latter the bearing of what I shall say to-night may, without its context, not seem as clear as I should wish. That I may remove in some measure this twofold stumbling-block, let me, before going further, recall succinctly and rapidly the main purport of my last Discourse.

The subject, then, of that Discourse was the relation of Artistic Production to the moral and physical conditions within which it is evolved ; it was my aim to lead you to see in Art, through all its various phases of energy or of decay, not an isolated phenomenon tossed on the hands of

chance, but a phenomenon organically developed and closely interwoven with the inner life of the races in whose midst it grows or fails. I pointed to some of the influences which we trace in studying its growth : such as the temper and genius of a race ; the social and intellectual condition of a community at a given moment, example, tradition, and geographical circumstances.

Of the operation of these formative causes, I offered you certain examples from among the nations of the ancient world ; and I sketched out for you in simplest outline the conditions under which three great phases of Art rose into life and flourished—the Arts of Egypt, of Assyria, and of Greece : the first an Art of strange dignity and of limitations not less strange, the Art of a race deeply pious, dwelling much on the thought of Death—a race imbued with a deep sense of national stability, counting its annals in centuries of decades, building for eternity. The second an Art in some respects derived from that of Egypt, but developed amongst a people of different stamp and stock ; like that people harsh, filled with the pride of life, taking little thought of the dead. Lastly, turning to the land of Greece, I pointed out to you that in its serenity, its directness, its measure, and its lofty idealism, Hellenic Art was the expression and faithful image of what was best in the Hellenic mind and spirit.

So far we had carried our subject : let us here resume it.



We cannot leave the eastern half of the Mediterranean without at least brief mention of that great Semitic people which, from its narrow seat, sent forth for many centuries its shrewd and restless sons to trade and to discover over every sea, embracing within their scope the far grey Orcades and the golden headlands of Malacca—the carriers of the Ancient World, the ubiquitous Phœnicians.

Their growth and greatness as a people, the extension of their sway, the pride of Punic Carthage and her fall, these things do not concern us here ; but the Phœnicians have this interest in connection with the History of Art—that they afford to us the spectacle of a race which, having more than any other contributed to the scattering of the seeds of Art, remained itself absolutely barren in regard to it. Works innumerable of Egyptian, of Assyrian, of Greek Art were carried on Phœnician keels to every land washed by the Mediterranean Sea ; beauty in every shape lay heaped on the full hands of this trading folk, but it kindled in them no responsive spark of artistic fire, stirred in them no chord of æsthetic sensibility : there is no Phœnician Art worthy the name. Much, indeed, that purported to be artistic work was turned out in Phœnician workshops. A brisk trade in forgeries, mainly of Egyptian Art—a trade wherein I have heard it whispered that they are not without their modern rivals—was carried on to the great gain of the Punic pocket ; but Tyre and Sidon have left no monuments to perpetuate

the memory of their greatness, and the splendour of Carthage clothed itself, as far as we know anything of it, in a bastard garment of Roman shape and origin.

We need not linger amongst this inartistic people, but will note in passing that neither wealth, nor opportunity, nor stimulating contact, will avail with those in whom the germs of artistic power are not found implanted.

And now let us turn to the land which, next to Greece, has played the greatest part in the History of the Western Arts—to Italy ; and, first, to that northern and central portion of it in which artistic activity was earliest manifested by a non-Hellenic people, to the home of the Etruscans.

Who, you will ask, were the Etruscans, and whence did they come ? Well, of all the riddles which the Sphinx of History has propounded to modern ingenuity, none is perhaps more perplexing than that to which you have just asked an answer : who were the Etruscans and whence did they come ?

That so casual and ill-equipped a gleaner in the fields of knowledge as I am, has no authoritative answer to offer, will not surprise you when I tell you that men of deep learning and keen insight have tried in vain to solve it in such a manner as to carry conviction beyond a more or less limited group of co-religionists. But see yourselves over how wide a field hypothesis is rife : the Etruscans, say some, are an unmixed race—a mixed race, say

others ; Turanians, some affirm, Pelasgians, others contend ; others, again, assert that they are Lydians—do not Herodotus and the Latin writers support this view ? Was it not their own belief ? but they are not, it is retorted, for Xanthus, a Lydian historian, repudiates this tradition ; they came from Greece—see their alphabet, which is Archaic Greek ; they are Trojans ; they came by land—they came by sea—they came both ways ; they are Pelasgo-Umbrians ; they are Tyrrhene-Pelasgians ; they are a Germanic race—did they not use amber in profusion, were they not called Rasena, which is what but Rhætians ? they are Scandinavians ; they are Jews ; they are Kelts ; were ever such divided counsels ?

I have said that I have no quality to offer you with confidence a solution of this riddle ; nevertheless, that you may not taunt me with leading you into a labyrinth and there forthwith forsaking you, I will say this, in general terms—that if you regard the Etruscans as an amalgam of two or more elements amongst which the dominant element was not the most artistic, and in which the traces of Eastern affinities are strong, and such as it is difficult to account for without some degree of consanguinity, you will find much in the study of Etruscan Art to support this view.

But if it is impossible to determine with precision who the Etruscans were, can we at least form a distinct idea what manner of folks they were ? Can we reconstruct for ourselves the outward sem-

blance of the race? On this head, also, it is difficult to feel any certainty; first, on account of the discrepancies we note in the artistic documents which have reached us, and, secondly, on account of the problematic value of those documents as testimony in this particular matter. Amongst these, the most numerous are the painted vases of every kind, which have been found in extraordinary numbers in Etruscan tombs. But of these vases the overwhelming majority is Greek; they were for the most part either imported directly from Corinth and other parts of Greece, or produced by Greek artists settled in Etruria.

It is clear that the racial type exhibited on these vases cannot be accepted as evidence on the Etruscan side; nor do such as reveal native workmanship come to our aid, so completely are they plagiarised from their Greek models.

In wall-painting, indeed, the Etruscans achieved a more individual development, yet even here they lay strangely under foreign bondage, and give us little clue to the physiognomy of their race.

We probably approach most nearly to some insight into that physiognomy, in its earlier phase at least, through certain archaic sepulchral monuments which have been brought to light in recent times, inasmuch as here portraiture seems to have been in some measure attempted; but neither do these monuments witness consistently one with the other, for whilst the terra-cotta sarcophagus, with which you are familiar in the British Museum,

reveals a curiously Mongolian type, other works of, probably, a like date—such, for instance, as a very remarkable sarcophagus at Perugia—show a type wholly different, and, in my eyes, distinctly Semitic.

A third type, again, is found in certain head-topped jars, of partly Egyptian form, called Canopi, which have been found chiefly, but not exclusively, in the district of Chiusi. This type is the reverse, in every respect, of that seen on the Museum sarcophagus ; the head is square, the jaw broad, the eyes are not oblique, the nose is short—a type which has something of a Keltic character. Nor can this absolute divergence from the other types to which I have alluded be ascribed exclusively to rudeness of workmanship ; it is too consistent and distinctive to be so accounted for. We have yet one more type to note, if type it be, in our endeavour to call up the Etruscans before our minds : the type which oppresses us with its ponderous dulness on the sarcophagi of the Roman period, and which is in its structure more analogous to that of which I have last spoken than to either of the others. The discrepancy between this type and those of the archaic monuments is so fundamental, that we must either infer from it a corresponding radical modification of the race, or we must assume that the element represented in the earlier works of more Oriental character is not the element which ultimately prevailed in Etruria. This, meanwhile, is certain : that the obese and



unattractive male personages who take their ease and toy with their prodigious necklaces, and not less the lolling ladies who lie lazily curled in their last slumber on the sepulchral urns of the later Art, by no means belie in their suggestiveness the character bestowed on their prototypes by Greeks and Romans alike—the character of gluttons and of sluggards.

Having thus tried with but little success to evoke the outward appearance of the Etruscan people, let us now see what their national temper and characteristics were. And, here, though their language is yet an unsolved mystery to us ; though no literary work from their hands comes, even in translation, to our assistance—no poem ; no history ; no written creed—we yet feel solid ground under our feet ; we know from other sources what their religion, what their form of government was ; and on their Art, borrowed though it be, their native temper is written large and plain.

If it be true, as has been said, that belief in beneficent gods is a mark of the Aryan stock, then assuredly the Etruscans can lay no claim to a pure descent from it. A superstitious people, with which, as with the Egyptians, all that concerned the dead was an absorbing pre-occupation, they were held in thralldom under a rigid creed of terror and of gloom, a creed obscured by mystic rites and stained in its origin with human blood. Worshipping, amongst many gods, some that were common to them and to the Greeks, they

imparted to these gods a grimness which was their own. No less than nine of their deities wielded the thunder ; Tinia, their Zeus, held, alone, three of the deadly bolts ; Mantus, the god of the Kingdom of the Dead, was horrid with writhing snakes and hooded with the skin of a wolf. Serpents wreathed the head of Mania his queen. Charun, who with the Etruscans corresponded to Hermes, the silent-footed leader of departed souls, the Psychopompos, was made by them repellent with every grotesque horror. Their rugged realism drew Fate, the inexorable, in the act of driving home with uplifted hammer the iron nail of doom. Over all other gods, removed, inexorable, supreme, sat shrouded deities, the Involuti, whose number was unknown, before whom Tinia himself bowed in submission. But this was not enough of haunting mystery ; the air was thick with demons and with genii ; to one of these, an elf-child, but with an old man's head, Tages by name, they owed the sacred volumes which held their rule and discipline of Faith. To such a faith the Art of Divination, an Etruscan art, the interpretation of the flight of birds, of entrails, of the skies, of prodigies of every kind, added a fitting complement. And this religion held the Etruscans within a doubly formidable grip, for civil and religious authority went hand in hand in the policy of their State. The Overlords of the federated communities, the princely Lucumones, were augurs as well as warriors. Great fighters were these proud Etrus-

cans ; shrewd men, too, keen tradesmen, bold navigators, jealous, suffering no rival settlements on their coasts. Like the Assyrians, they were prone to pomp and splendour, enamoured of ceremonial, lovers altogether of the good things of the world, very assiduous at the banquet ; and if the martial Lydian trumpet was given by them to Rome, so also was the Lydian flute, the companion of the feast. And here let us, in passing, note a suggestive fact : so long as their national self-respect endured, so long were their opulent carnalities held in some check by their manly fibre ; but as by degrees they crumbled under the iron hand of Rome into national decay, the flood-gates of their vices were loosened and they were submerged in the tide of their own corruption. To sum them up, they were a fierce, strong people, imbrued in superstition, taking grim views of the unseen world, views anything but grim in regard to the visible world ; nevertheless, industrious, acute, speculative, learned ; and withal loving and fostering Art with a sustained passion which cannot but surprise us, for, as a race, they were endowed with little artistic genius.

And what was the character of the Art they produced, and how shaped by the mental and ethical conditions I have just described ? I have said that great as was their propensity to Art, the inborn gift was not strong within them ; they initiated nothing ; they assimilated and modified the Art of others ; modified it, indeed, so that

their productions are marked with a strong and unmistakable national stamp. Nevertheless, this stamp, even when their Art was at its best, was, it must be admitted, always a stamp of inferiority and the sign of an uncouth people.

I have told you that the Etruscan tongue is still a riddle to us ; but the Etruscan alphabet being, as I also told you, in fact Greek, we are able, by means of bilingual inscriptions, and in other ways, to see how they deal with Greek names, and also what their own names are, and we thus obtain an idea of what I may call the physiognomy of the language. Here are some of these names—native and borrowed ; you shall judge of their euphony :—the Greek Persephone became in a Tuscan mouth Phersipnei, Alkestis—Alksti ; the twin brother of Castor was called by them Pultuke ; but stranger and yet more crabbed were their homespun appellations. What do you say to Tinkvil ? to Phluphluus ? And yet all these yield in their turn to certain other names with which my plain British organs have vainly sought to cope. I offer you one of these to take home for private experiment and discipline—the following letters compose it : PHLERTHRKE.

Now these things are not, as you might perhaps fancy, foreign to our subject—they lie, on the contrary, at the root of it. That crabbed harshness which we have noted in Etruscan speech—like all speech, the mirror of the people who fashioned it—is precisely the quality which

Etruria imparted to all her artistic work, and which taints in a greater or less degree even the happiest achievements of her decorative Art. Of this, perhaps no more delightful examples can be quoted than the two lovely bronze mirrors, preserved respectively at Perugia and at Berlin, representing—one, Helen between Castor and Pollux; the other, Bacchus, Semele, and Apollo. In either case the design is distinctly Greek; nevertheless, a certain ruggedness of form and handling is felt in both, betraying a temper less subtle than the Hellenic, and we read without surprise on the one "Pultuke," and "Phluphlus" on the other. This peculiarity, this certain boorishness of which I speak, manifests itself, as you would expect, more especially in those portions of a work in which the Etruscan artist was most thrown on his own resources—I mean the purely ornamental portions. So, for instance, Etruscan scrollwork is peculiarly rude and uncouth. But if we trace these characteristics in works which at the first glance might almost seem to come from an Athenian studio, they are of course most strikingly present in works of more purely native stamp; they mark accordingly the paintings which surround the chambers of the Tuscan tombs; but nowhere perhaps are they more vividly asserted than in that most striking relic of Etruscan Art—the bronze lamp in the Museum of Cortona. In this magnificent work foreign influence is, indeed, present, an influence distinctly

Asiatic as well as Greek. In the main, however, the work is typically Etruscan ; it is Etruscan in its rude magnificence and weird conception, in its array of winged harpies and of alternate satyrs, huddling naked round its rim, its rugged row of heads of horned, bearded Bacchus ; Etruscan in the glaring Gorgon, whose tusks and out-thrust tongue make hideous the lower centre of the lamp ; Etruscan in the ingenious ordering of the whole ; Etruscan in the unfaltering sharpness of its execution.

Such was Etruscan art as long as it retained its virility. What it became when sloth and self-indulgence had sapped the vanquished nation's manhood, we see in the dull wilderness of clumsy sculptured urns of the Roman period, which repels us in museums of Etruscan antiquities, works in which, as a rule, nothing of the old strenuous temper still lives on, except that Assyrian edginess of touch which marks the Etruscan chisel. And yet, even in this period, once and again a lingering echo may be caught of past, more noble days ; once and again the dawn may be descried of yet more noble days to come ; and I doubt whether there is in the art of Etruria anything so strangely grand, so solemnly suggestive, as a small monument of this date in the vault of the Volumnii, near Perugia, the tomb of Volumnus Violens, the son of Aulus and Calfatia. The recumbent effigy of the Volumnian is, indeed, rude and of little merit ; rude also in execution is the monument on

which it rests, but in conception and design of a dignity almost Dantesque. Facing the visitor, as he enters the sepulchral chamber, this small sarcophagus—small in dimensions, but in impressiveness how great!—rivets him at once under the taper's fitful light. Raised on a rude basement, the body of the monument figures the entrance to a vault; in the centre, painted in colours that have nearly faded, appears a doorway, within the threshold of which four female figures gaze wistfully upon the outer world; on either side two winged genii, their brows girt with the never-failing Etruscan serpents, but wholly free from the quaintness of early Etruscan treatment, sit cross-legged, watching, torch in hand, the gate from which no living man returns. Roughly as they are hewn it would be difficult to surpass the stateliness of their aspect or the art with which they are designed; Roman gravity, but quickened with Etruscan fire, invests them: a new artistic mood seems to be struggling in them for expression, and our thoughts are irresistibly carried forward to the supreme sculptor whom the Tuscan land was one day to bear, and in the furnace of whose genius all the elements of Etruscan art were to be fused into a new type of unsurpassed sublimity.

But, you will ask, if in the higher plastic and pictorial arts the old Tuscan rudeness is everywhere revealed, how shall we account for its absence in so much of that Etruscan goldsmith's work, of which the fame extended even to

Athens, in Periclean days? I answer that this work, so much of it, at least, as is foreign in spirit to the Art which we have just been considering, is not, in fact, Etruscan work—I mean, not the product of that element in the Etruscan body which became dominant, and of which the character is so distinctly coined. The eminent jeweller, Signor Augusto Castellani, by whom I believe this view was first put forward, has well pointed out that some of the more exquisite specimens of this jewellery have been found in non-Etruscan towns, as, for instance, at Præneste, and that they are identical in character with work of the same class, and hardly less beautiful, found in the Crimea.

Whether this work, which he calls Tyrrhenian, is, as he holds, more ancient than the Etruscan Art which I have described to you, or whether it is in part the contemporary work of the surviving Pelasgic element in the Etruscan amalgam, may be doubted; meanwhile, this twofold element in the Art of Tuscany seems to me to have a significance bearing on the eventful development of that Art in the days of its revival, a bearing which I may consider with you at some future time.

Of the Architecture of the Etruscans, in the strict sense of the word, we know little beyond what we gather in the pages of Vitruvius. This, however, we may note, that, whilst their temples appear to have offered a modification of the Doric order, their rock-cut tombs present, in more than



one instance, constructive features identical with those which mark the so-called treasure-houses of Mykenæ and Orchomenos, and the Tumulus of Tantalais on the Gulf of Smyrna. The Etruscans would not seem to have been a race of Architects ; they were, on the other hand, unsurpassed as building engineers. Their city walls and gates and their great works of drainage attest, to this day, in their massive strength, the vigour and the boldness of their authors ; and it is to the engineers of Etruria that European Architecture owes primarily a feature which lies at the root of all its modern developments—the Arch. And here, again, we come upon a fact not without suggestiveness in its bearing upon the problem of the origin of the Etruscan stock : the arch—the constructive, radiating arch, I mean—was known, it is true, at a very remote date in Egypt ; but it is in Asia, in the palaces of the Assyrian Kings, that we first find it rising to the dignity of a prominent architectural feature.

With this bald and inadequate sketch, I must leave the consideration of Etruscan Art in connection with Etruscan folk, and hurry on to the second portion of my subject, the Art of Rome.

Viewed from the standpoint of our present inquiry, the development of Art in Rome has a twofold interest : no more pointed example could, on the one hand, be found of the influence exercised by the temper of the people over its artistic production ; nothing, on the other, could be more

suggestive than the contrast it affords with the growth of Art in kindred Greece ; nor could anything more vividly than this contrast illustrate the profound and radical divergence, moral and intellectual, which time and circumstances may effect between twin offshoots of the same stock : I say twin offshoots, for it would seem that the forefathers of the Greek and Roman races continued to dwell together at some distant period, after breaking away from their ancestral home.

They had in common a worship which was common to them only : the worship of the Goddess of the Hearth : Hestia—Vesta ; ideas of wrong and retribution were expressed by them in words of common origin ; they had common terms of agriculture, a common system of mensuration, similar views on marriage and on the maternal dignity, and not a few other points of contact. These two races, thus closely kin, settled down, severally, in two lands, not indeed identical in geographical and climatic conditions, but neither widely dissimilar, lands lying side by side, divided—should I not rather say, united?—by a narrow strip of sea ; but the one stretching out to the regions of the rising sun, the other turned toward that western world which it was one day to mould and to fashion ; and each, for all this consanguinity and neighbourhood, as far as east and west asunder from the other in the blossoming of its genius, and in the work and the career which were the fruit and outcome of that genius.

If we turn to republican Athens, in which the Hellenic spirit reached its fullest expansion, we see a people gifted with an intellect supple, mobile, fearless, beyond all precedent ; a race unwearied in its pursuit of the ideal, rejoicing in the exercise of abstract reason, withal full of the joy of life ; striving after the fullest and freest development of the individual, in body and in mind ; a radiant people, scattering its light abroad, and subduing the world under the sway of its ideas—and yet, with no thought of, nor aptitude for, material empire over that world ; eager, indeed, in the management of its own affairs, but with little genius for managing the affairs of others, having small instincts of national cohesion—a race which, before even it had emerged on the horizon of historic times, had sent forth into the grey twilight of ambiguous days the effulgence of an undying poem ; a race from which we who are Artists must ever seek supreme examples when we strive after the noblest embodiment of the noblest thoughts, and amongst which the plastic Arts leapt to their full stature in fewer years than are wont to divide the cradle from the grave of men.

In republican Rome, amongst their next of kin, we find this picture point for point reversed ; not, here, a swift and joyous intellect, but an intellect of tardy growth, grave, without spontaneity ; a temper not tuned to the ideal, bent on the practical ; not seeking the beautiful, grasping at the

useful ; intent not on the joys of life, but on its duties ; receiving illumination, not illuminating. We find the individual not expanding freely in unfettered spiritual growth, but sternly merged into the obliterating State ; we find the imperial sense supreme, science and letters for centuries non-existent as a native product ; the Arts not springing from the soil, but imported, like letters, first from the north and then from the south.

Such is the contrast presented by the two peoples.

Let us now see how far in Rome the complexion of the race, being what we find it, conspired with other circumstances to determine the character and growth of Roman Art. A word, first, as to the religion of the Romans. The Roman creed honoured many gods worshipped also by the Greeks, but honoured them in a wholly different spirit. With Romans the favoured deity was not the luminous goddess who embodied the Athenian mind, and reigned on the Acropolis, but the strong Lord of strife, Mavors, the great Sabellic fighting god. Restraining awe was the atmosphere which clothed the gods of Rome ; the joyous piety of the Greeks was unknown to them ; there was, for several centuries at least, no mirth in anything that was Roman. To the Roman every object, every event, had a special deity—a spiritual counterpart, so to speak : his gods were without number, their ranks were constantly recruited. I have said the Romans knew no mirth ;

looking to the manner in which they created to themselves gods, I am tempted to add that they had no sense of humour ; over their house-doors alone not less than four divinities presided ; one for the threshold, one for the lintel, for each door-post one. Did they introduce a silver coinage ? at once a god issued from the mint beside it—the God Argentinus, the son of Æsculanus, of him of the copper coin. Does Hannibal turn back before the walls of Rome ? a god is evoked to commemorate his turning back, and a shrine raised to Rediculus Tutanus—as who should say the “ God of the Narrow Escape.”

Meanwhile, their ethic tone was high. Of this no better proof can be found than the deference in which their women were held among them. Here is an instance of that deference : When Coriolanus, yielding to the entreaties of the Roman women, desisted from the threatened siege of Rome, the grateful Senate offered to the deliverers of the city the choice of their reward. They asked permission to raise on the spot where they had prevailed a temple to the Fortune of Women, where they might for all time, once in each year, celebrate the triumph of their pleading ; and this privilege was conceded to them. There could be no better witness to their social influence than such a concession.

The Roman people, I said, was reared in the ordeal of constant war : from the day on which it rose against its last king, Tarquin the Haughty,

and flung him and his vicious brood from their gates, to the days when Carthage and Corinth fell; from the days of the Sabine Junius Brutus to the days of the Scipios, its record is a record of continuous deadly war, at home and abroad—wars with the Etruscans, wars with the Samnites, wars with all the rival Latin tribes, wars with the Gauls, Punic wars, wars with Greece, with Pyrrhus, with Hannibal, with Philip, with Antiochus—war incessant through these three centuries. During this period, or the greater part of it, the struggle was for national existence; it was during this period that Roman citizens were trained to that absolute, unquestioning effacement of the individual before the community, that unfaltering spirit of self-sacrifice in the hour of public need and danger, which was their strength, and fitted them for the headship of the world. Of this rugged and lofty type a characteristic embodiment was seen, that I may quote one, in the elder Cato; a man marred, no doubt, in some degree by narrowness and rigidity of mind, but compelling respect from his austere purity, his single-mindedness, his pristine simplicity; a little unattractive it must be owned, and I fear the young ladies among my hearers will not be drawn to him in much kindness when they are told that he vehemently upheld against the Roman ladies a certain law—the Oppian Law—which, amongst other sinister provisions, debarred them from the wearing of coloured dresses. Those same young ladies will, however,

learn with satisfaction that the great Censor was worsted in the fight ; that the hateful law was abrogated ; and colour—indeed, I fear, from what we know of Roman taste, every colour of the rainbow—resumed, under his eyes, its previous pride of place.

Now, it will be evident to you that, the life of the Roman people being for so long a period such as I have described it, neither the growth of Science among them, unless it be of military science, nor the growth of Letters and of Art were to be expected. The Roman during these centuries was in effect but as a sentinel always under arms, ever alert and at his post, and the pleasant paths of learning and of culture were unknown to him, or known only to be despised, or at best tolerated. Accordingly we find amongst Romans, till a comparatively late date, a barrenness over the whole intellectual field which is simply startling. The fifth century of Rome was the period of its highest moral level and its purest fame. At this time, some three hundred years before Christ, every name that was to make Athens glorious, for all time, in Literature and Art, had been inscribed upon the roll of fame:—Homer, Hesiod, Pindar ; Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes ; Herodotus and Thucydides ; Socrates and Plato ; and, more dear to us, Phidias and Praxiteles, Polygnotus and Apelles ; all these had come and gone and were immortal. Now, what had Rome in that day ? In native Art nothing

but a few frescoes by an amateur ; in Letters practically nothing. No History, no Drama, no Epic, no Poetry of whatever kind. The Twelve Tables, that was about the extent of their Literature. Is it not characteristic that the first book produced by the greatest lawgivers of the world should be precisely a body of laws ?

Nearly a century later, when Scipio the African had vanquished at Zama the greatest military genius of his age, Hannibal, the Hymn of Praise in which this great deed was sung had, not a Roman, but a Tarentine Greek, Livius Andronicus, for its author. Nævius, who, still later, wrote in rude verse the Chronicles of Rome, was not a Roman ; Ennius, who strove to cast in Epic form the Annals of the City, was of Messapian birth ; Fabius Pictor, the father of Roman History, wrote in Greek. Cato's "Origines" were the first attempt at Roman History, written in the vernacular, proceeding from a Roman pen.


With the Drama things fared no better ; till Nævius wrote his tragedies, and, like Æschylus, sang wars in which he himself had fought, Roman actors had been their own playwrights. Would you like to know what a Roman audience could be in days when Rome was already the greatest power in the world ? Hear this story : About the year 169 before Christ, an *impresario*, looking about him for some attraction wherewith to fill his theatre, and at the same time to raise the tone of his bill of entertainment, bethought himself of



certain exceptionally accomplished Greek flute-players. These he accordingly engaged and introduced to a Roman public. Imprudent and foolhardy innovator! his flautists were received with howls and hisses and cries for the manager, who, coming before the curtain in the vain hope of allaying the storm, was peremptorily requested to make his musicians *fight*. The Greeks bowed to necessity, and fought accordingly, scoring, it is believed, an unparalleled success! It need, perhaps, not be added that actors lived at that date in an atmosphere of much contempt.

If Literature was at a low ebb in the first centuries of Rome, things stood no better with Artistic production. Gifted with no innate aptitudes for the Arts—although in one of them, as we shall see, they eventually achieved considerable things—the Romans lay, until the tide of Greek Art broke on them after the fall of Syracuse, wholly under the influence of the Etruscans. This complete supremacy of Etruscan Artistic production will not surprise you, when you reflect how largely beholden the Romans were to Etruria under almost every head. Etruria gave them kings, augurs, doctors, mimes, musicians, boxers, runners; the royal purple, the royal sceptre, the fasces, the curule chair, the Lydian flute, the straight trumpet, and the curved trumpet. The education of a Roman youth received its finishing touches in Etruria. Tuscan engineers had girt Rome with walls; Tuscan engineers had built the

great conduit through which the swamp, which was one day to be the Roman Forum, was drained into the Tiber. What wonder, then, that in Architecture, also in Painting, in Sculpture, in Jewellery, and in all the things of taste, Etruscans gave the law to the ruder and less cultured race? Accordingly, Etruscan architects adorned Rome with temples. So, also, the Etruscans gave to the dwelling-houses of the Romans their most characteristic feature, the Atrium, with its portico and its tank. So, again, Sculpture in Rome was wholly in the hands of the Etruscans. The terra-cotta figures which, even in the days of Cato, adorned the pediments of the Roman temples were of Etruscan workmanship. For bronzes, wherein Etruria was famous, Rome was again beholden to her. In the minor, and purely decorative Arts and Industries, Rome was furnished from the same source: the booths in the Tuscan street, under the Palatine Hill, were gay with artistic manufactures of every kind; here Etruscan tradesmen displayed their famous mirrors, smooth, graven, and embossed, their lamps, their candelabra, their cups and vases, their weapons, their musical instruments; here the Roman ladies indulged their passion for those masterpieces of the Goldsmith-Art for which Etruscan Artificers were famous. As in carving, casting, and chasing, so also in painting, Etruscans led the way. Mural painting it was, no doubt, chiefly, that they practised: in this their fame was ancient; Pliny,



indeed, in describing certain wall-paintings still preserved in his day at Ardea and at Lanuvium, places them before the foundation of Rome ; as, however, he adds that the nudes were, in one of them, of remarkable beauty, we must, I think, even after making a liberal allowance for his deficient connoisseurship, entertain grave doubts on the score of his chronology. And this Etruscan supremacy in the things of Art lasted for some four or five centuries—lasted, in fact, until it was first sapped, and then finally swept aside, by a counter-current of influence which, about the third century before Christ, began to filter through Campania into Rome from the opposite end of the peninsula, and, after the fall of Syracuse, triumphantly invaded and possessed the Roman world—the direct influence of Greece. From that day, from the day on which Marcellus brought home in triumph the spoils of the great Sicilian city, an inextinguishable craving for works of Grecian Art, for Grecian marbles, Grecian bronzes, Grecian pictures, Grecian gems, seemed to inflame the wealthy magnates, the nobles, and the *nouveaux riches* of Rome ; from that day onward we see arise and multiply the great tribe of depredators which, settling like a locust-cloud over all the Grecian lands, spoiled and bared them of all their hoarded treasure, till the works of Grecian Artists crowded in the imperial city were counted not in hundreds but in hundreds of thousands. There were various types of these

depredators—some, like Mummius, ravaged in stupid ignorance ; some, like Pompey, plundered for vain display ; some in a frenzied but enlightened lust of acquisition, like Verres. Of the unbridled greed of this last—the supreme type of the insolent despoiler—to whom no temple was sacred, to whom his plighted word was nothing, and who made robbery more insulting by affecting to buy what none durst refuse to part with, you may see a startling picture in Cicero's famous oration "de Signis." Together with Greek Art, Greek influence in every other form of intellectual activity assumed absolute lordship in Rome. Greek became the fashionable language among the higher classes. The *bon ton* made it necessary to Hellenise all things. Youths were sent to Athens to complete their education ; ladies talked Greek to the Greek servants who reared their children ; Greek had precedence of Latin in the schools ; conspicuous Romans affected to write in Greek. Amongst others, for instance, Cicero, who asks Atticus, in one of his delightful letters, to look over for him a history he had just been writing, in Greek, of his own Consulate, and takes occasion to allude to a like work by Lucullus.

But how different was the outcome of this influence in the realm of Literature and in that of Art ! In the one the seed fell on soil rich in noble germs, bringing forth in due time a noble harvest : in History, in Poetry both lyric and epic, in Satire, in Oratory, Roman genius counts

a long roll of famous names. In the field of Art what do we see? The profusion of perfect works that was poured into the lap of Rome elicited amongst her people little or no creative life, and except in one or two forms of Art, as we shall presently see, little fruit was yielded by her; nay more, indirectly its effects were harmful: speaking to no ideal sense—for no æsthetic sense was there, stirring no emulative impulse—its main effect was, in the great majority of cases, only to minister to vulgar vanity, to nourish that craving for display and luxury which pervaded Roman society already in the last century of the Republic, and, merging in the general appetite for unbridled self-indulgence, helped to bring about under the Empire that moral turpitude and putrescence on which the wrath of Juvenal and shameless Martial's jibes have thrown so fierce a light.

But what, in the midst of this constant and multitudinous influx of artistic wealth, was the attitude of the Roman people at large towards Art itself? It was an attitude of more or less sincerely contemptuous indifference. The pursuit of Art was regarded as one little becoming the dignity of a Roman citizen: a frame of mind not perhaps very unintelligible in a race of a coarse fibre, which, for centuries, had lived wholly in one order of ideas: to fight, to subjugate, to rule—this had been their engrossing thought, this even Virgil reminded them was their supreme mission. So wise a man as Seneca described Art as a pursuit not worthy

to rank among liberal studies. It was an amusement fit for children, said Cicero—"oblectamenta puerorum"; a pursuit good enough for frivolous Greeks, the Romans thought—starveling little Greeks—"Græculi esurientes"—as Juvenal called them; crazy little Greeks—"Græculi delirantes"—as Petronius makes one of his personages call Apelles, if you please, and Phidias!

Here is a characteristic touch: Cicero, in that long and vehement indictment against Verres, to which I have already alluded, is describing, amongst other misdeeds, the robbery, or enforced purchase for a nominal sum, of certain statues by Greek Artists of the first rank, and is seeking to convey the impression that he has, for the requirements of his brief, made himself acquainted with the names of a few Greek Artists—"a foolish subject enough," he says, apologetically—*nescio quid nugatorium*—nor has he, indeed, quite mastered them; "one statue," he says, "is by Myron, another by—by—let me see"—and, turning to his scribe—"Ah! quite so—Polycletus—thank you!—Polycletus." In this strain did it seem necessary to Cicero to allude, before a Roman audience, to two of the foremost among Greek sculptors.

Now, two circumstances cast an amusing sidelight on this little episode. One is that the fourth "Verrine" was never delivered; the failure of memory, the appeal to the scribe, the recognition of the forgotten name—all these were a carefully prepared piece of acting, a rhetorical artifice.

The second is that Cicero was himself a keen and passionate collector.

Strange views on Art peep out occasionally in the writings of Latin authors. Listen, for instance, to the younger Pliny : " Behold," he says, " how much statues, images, pictures, men, too, and animals of various kinds—nay, even trees, so they are handsome ones—are enhanced by *size*." In all this jumble of men, animals, pictures, and trees is not the emphasis on size very characteristically Roman? We are not surprised, amongst such a people, to find Nero ordering his portrait 150 feet high. But, if you would sound the depth of Roman barbarism in artistic matters, I commend to your attention Claudius, the Emperor, a man, mind, of refinement and learning, who, being the possessor of two portraits of Alexander the Great by Apelles—I say, Apelles—caused the heads in these pictures to be painted out, to make room for the features of the divine Augustus!

Such then, being the conditions and the atmosphere which surrounded the growth of Art in Rome, we shall not wonder if we find its development both limited and, except in one or two directions, barren of great results. For the practice of ideal sculpture, indeed, the first conditions were wanting in them ; the subtle sense of form, so brilliantly displayed in their best literary work, failed them wholly in the plastic Arts. Neither the character of their religion, the habit of their minds, nor the nature of their customs, led them

to this mode of expression. As regards their painting, we are absolutely in the dark. What may have been the value of the commemorative wall-pictures of the patrician amateur, Fabius Pictor—pictures of which Valerius Maximus appears to have blushed that so fine a gentleman should have descended to produce them—it is difficult to conjecture ; nor are we better able to represent to ourselves the painted works of the poet Pacuvius, which were said to be second only to those of Fabius. A painting, purporting to be the work of a Roman, has come down to us under the name of the “Nozze Aldebrandine.” It is an overrated work, in which, again, Greek influence is everywhere, and of which, for that matter, we have no certainty that it is not the work of a Greek craftsman residing in Rome. This meanwhile is certain, that painting struck no roots among the Romans. It is already described as dying, by the Elder Pliny ; and, by another writer of the same period, as having disappeared without leaving a trace. Art, as such, Art, as æsthetic expression, nowhere, in fact, held to the roots of the Roman temperament. Nevertheless, its practice found on two sides favouring elements in the Roman genius ; and in two of its phases, accordingly, it did achieve memorable things : but in either case the impulse was ethic rather than æsthetic. It was from the earliest days a characteristic custom of the Romans that they surrounded themselves and decorated their atria with the effigies of their



ancestors. These effigies were originally, it would seem, wax moulds of the countenances of the deceased, but eventually works of Art, modelled or painted, took the place of these primitive masks. These images, duly decked and draped, it was in each family the custom to carry in solemn procession at every funeral ceremony. The Roman was buried, as he had lived, under the eyes of his forefathers. You see at once how powerful a moral leverage lay in this custom. Speaking of these effigies, Pliny exclaims, "What a mighty stimulant was here! The very walls reproached, day by day, the craven owner that intruded amongst trophies not his own." Some, indeed, seem to have thought that this example should be for the common profit, not for private advantage only; for he alludes, in another passage, to a magnificent speech by Agrippa—from which, by-the-by, I should like to prefix a quotation to the Catalogues of our Winter Exhibitions—wherein he descants on the far greater use of Works of Art when seen in public places than when exiled in far-off country houses. But I am digressing. You perceive what an impulse was here furnished to the Art of Portraiture—to a vivid and faithful record of the lineaments of those in the light of whose example every Roman, as long as Roman virtue lasted, strove to live his life. Accordingly, we find that the one branch of Sculpture in which Rome achieved any excellence is precisely this—vivid and faithful portraiture.

And in this development of Art the impulse was, I repeat, ethic, not æsthetic.

We shall notice the same circumstance in the other and far more important development of Art in Rome to which I have alluded. It may, I think, safely be said that, among the characteristics of the Roman national temper, none was more marked than the imperial instinct, the unquestioning belief in a mission to conquer and to rule. And here we come upon the second point at which Art found a nourishing principle in the genius of the Roman people. I speak of its achievements in Architecture. This high imperial sense, this conscious calling to rule and reign, demanded outward and visible expression—not in Rome alone, but even to the furthest verge of Rome's ever-spreading sway; symbols of its might and its magnificence were needed to impress the subject races, and to speak to their eyes of the sovereign majesty of the imperial people. This function Architecture stepped in to fulfil, and fulfilled nobly. It is not my province, nor is it within my grasp, to follow out in detail the fortunes of the building-craft in Rome. It is enough here to note that, by the adoption from the Tuscans, and the wider development, of the vault as a constructive principle, the Romans evolved a new phase in Architectural Art, and filled the world with buildings in which their strength always, their dignity sometimes, the coarseness of their fibre not infrequently, find striking expression, and

in which we read, as on a written page, in due order of time, the rise, the exaltation, the downfall, and the decay of the great Roman race. This also, finally, is worthy of notice, that whilst the Architecture of Rome reflected in a stately manner enough certain characteristics of its people, nevertheless, not being the spontaneous utterance of an æsthetic instinct, but the outcome of material needs and of patriotic pride, it was only an incomplete expression of Roman civilisation. Of the Athenians I have said that every best attribute of their minds lives and is revealed in their matchless buildings. Power, dignity, measure, precision, elegance, suppleness, serenity, and the rapture of the ideal—these attributes are gathered up in one perfect organism, and made manifest in the stainless marble of their temples. It is not so with Roman Architecture. That Architecture is, I said, an incomplete expression. There are in the masterpieces of Roman Literature, here a perfection of finish, there a sparkling vivacity, and there again a subtle charm and grace, of which their buildings showed but slender signs. To them, in brief, Art was not vernacular : their purest taste, their brightest gifts of mind, found no utterance in it.

Here time warns me that I must leave these all too bald and fragmentary reflections on Roman Art. Yet bear with me, for a last moment, while I remind you of one lesson at least which each of us may gather from them.

We have seen Art—such Art as it was given to Rome to achieve—rise and fall with the virtues of the Roman people. From the lips of the most seeing of its sons we know the solvent in which those virtues perished: that solvent was the greed, the insatiate greed, of gold—“*auri sacra fames*”—the rot of luxury: “More deadly than arms,” Juvenal magnificently exclaims, “luxury has swept down upon us, and avenges the conquered world.”

. . . . “*Sævior armis*  
*Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciscitur orbem.*”

Here, then, is our lesson and our warning; for assuredly, to an Artist, the day on which the deadening fumes of this insidious lust for gold cast their first blurring mists across the pure light of his ideal is the herald of a struggle on which hang, not only the wreck or the triumph of his better self, but the marring or the maintaining in his Art of whatever is that better self's reflection.



**ADDRESS**

**DECEMBER 10TH, 1887**



STUDENTS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

Those among you who have followed with any interest the inquiry which formed the purport of my two latest addresses—an inquiry, namely, into the relation of artistic production to the moral and physical conditions within which it is evolved—may, perhaps, remember what point we had reached in that inquiry when last we left it, and over what portion of its field we had travelled. They may remember that, surveying briefly in the first of those addresses the evolution of Art in Egypt, in Assyria, and in Greece, and, in the second, its evolution in Etruria and in Rome, we did not fail to note its organic connection with the moral fibre and with the national life of the peoples among which it flourished.

Italy, then, last occupied our thoughts ; to that region we will turn them again to-night. But to an Italy how changed ! Not to the Italy of the Cæsars, but to that other Italy which rose out of the ashes of their empire ; no longer a land of which the centred might was gathered up in the august name of one Sovereign city ; a land no longer the home of an Imperial race sending forth its armed hosts to subdue the world, building up,



for the control of a perishable state, an imperishable system of jurisprudence ; yet for its inspiration in all the graces of culture the tributary of an alien people, and all but barren in every art except the art of building. It is not such a land or such a people that we have before us to-night. It is a land not homogeneous, but split up and parcelled out into numberless communities, divided against itself ; sending forth no armies beyond the bastions of the Alps, and whence no fleet went out on either sea except in the service, or in the defence, or for the ends of trade, yet destined once again to draw to itself with magnetic force the gaze of all the nations ; and this land we shall see strong in every intellectual gift and grace, shaking off first among the people of Europe the torpor of the Dark Ages, revealing man once more to himself and the world to man, and heralding the dawn of a wider, freer, intellectual life.

Our special concern will be to see how Art fared in this great movement towards the light, and to note where its course consented with, and where it diverged from, the general current of mental and moral evolution. The subject is, however, so wide and complex that I shall be forced this evening by the limits of our time, and by some decent regard for the patience of my young hearers, to confine my attention, apart from a few remarks of a general character, mainly to one portion of it, to that which bears on Tuscan Art ; not, indeed, in forgetfulness of the pomp and glow

of the Venetian school, or of the great achievements of the other schools of Northern Italy, but because Tuscany presents to us the most homogeneous and the most comprehensive image of Italian culture in all its aspects from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century; and is, therefore, best suited to illustrate our present inquiry. And within the range of Tuscan Art, again, I shall, for further brevity, ask your attention chiefly to that branch of it which was as characteristically an Italian form of expression as sculpture had been the pre-eminently characteristic expression of the genius of the Greeks—the art of painting.

Before addressing ourselves to the general aspects of the intellectual evolution of Italy in the second period of her supremacy, let us glance at the human material on which it worked, and see what the race was which occupied Italian soil some eight centuries after the fall of the Empire of the West. No doubt during the later years of Imperial rule no inconsiderable modification had been slowly taking place in the lower strata of the population, through the wholesale settling on the soil of barbarian prisoners of war. But it was not until, in the fifth century, the Roman Empire crumbled under the heel of one of the many barbarian hordes which had long furnished it with soldiers, and often with rulers—it was not until Odoacer and his Herules had contemptuously brushed aside the last descendant of Romulus and Augustus, that a state of things began such as

must materially affect the complexion of the Italian race, though in degrees varying according as, in various regions, submersion under the succeeding floods of invasion was general or partial. For several centuries after the collapse of Imperial Rome, wave after wave of foreign hosts rolled along the face of prostrate Italy, assailing her now from this side and now from that ; Ostrogoths, Lombards, Huns, Franks, and Germans poured in succession into the Cisalpine plains, and pushed east and west of the great mountain-spine of Italy, far into the heart of the land. Whatever modification the Italian races underwent must, therefore, be sought chiefly in the northern and central portions of the Peninsula. From the sea, it is true, came Saracens and Normans, of whom the latter carved for themselves a kingdom, and installed a dynasty on the south-western coast ; but in neither case were the numbers of the invaders sufficient to affect the characteristics of the races among which they settled ; and here let us at once note a marked instance of the persistency of racial characteristics. Unconquered by the Lombards, occupied for a short space only by the Goths, strengthened by the influx of Italian refugees, Rome herself sustained little modification in the characteristics of her inhabitants ; and, accordingly, the well-knit, stately type which marked them, a noble vessel which had once contained Imperial souls, was preserved as we see it even in our own day ; but, together with this bodily

type endured also the old sterility in the things that concern the graphic Arts ; and even in the days when, enthroned once more, Rome wielded the sceptre of the Christian world, at a time when she gathered within her walls all that was great in Art and Letters, no solitary flower of native genius rose to grace her name, unless the word genius may be used—whereto I should demur—in connection with the name of a brawny and prolific plagiarist of Raphael, known to fame as Giulio Romano.

Another instance of heredity is offered to us in Tuscany. Sheltered though she was within the folding arms of the Apennines, her race did not, it is true, escape the alloy brought by foreign immigration. Nevertheless, it seems to me that, while in the field of Art the new amalgam produced an infinitely nobler and more exquisite flower than had grown on her soil in the old Etruscan days, the two distinct elements in Etruscan Art to which I drew your attention in my last address—one delicate and graceful, the other harsh and almost Assyrian in its rudeness—assert themselves curiously in the Art of Christian Etruria. Of the subtle graces which breathe in that Art, from Giotto to Lionardo, it is needless to speak ; and surely in the rugged angularities of a Verocchio, a Signorelli, or a Donatello, and in the shadow of sadness which broods over so much of the finest Florentine work, the more sombre phase of the Etruscan temper still lives on.

Meanwhile, with whatever curiosity we may scan the history of a people, however carefully we may seek in it the fecundating or the sterilising influences of certain sets of conditions, the source of the artistic gift, the secret of its permanence or its periclitation, will ever remain obscure. Of which obscurities here are two illustrations : In Venice, a seafaring Italian race, stimulated and inflamed by the sight of the splendour and the spoils of Byzantium, developed to its last limits the wealth and witchery of colour, and summed up in the Basilica of St. Mark all the glow and glamour of the East. To the galleys of Genoa the waters of the Bosphorus were as well known as to the galleys that sailed under Dandolo ; from the round tower which still bears their country's name, Genoese traders looked down upon the same magic picture of profuse splendour as that which had dazzled their rivals from the Rialto ; contact with the Orientals, whose craft in the interweaving of many colours was vaunted already by Dante, was common to them and to the Venetians ; and yet what creative artistic impulse was called forth within them ? None, absolutely none ; the seed had fallen on a naked rock to be swept away by the next passing wind. The Ligurian was not an artist, the Venetian was ; who shall say why ? Again, if ever a country was blessed with natural resources, it is the region of which we speak as the Two Sicilies. Blessed in its climate, prodigal in its fertility, inhabited by a

race strongly tinged with Greek blood, it abounded in artistic vitality in the days of Hellenic greatness, and was saturated still with artistic feeling in the days when the younger Pliny lived. What has been the native production in art of this enchanted land in Christian times? What artist of really conspicuous mark has it sent forth? Again I have to say—none, absolutely none; for we shall scarcely give that title to Salvator Rosa, a painter harsh and gloomy like the Spanish rule under which he was born, whose painted work seems almost in scorn of the bright heavens under which he wrought; albeit an artist to whom we are drawn in sympathy by certain wild sweet songs in which he has, as I think, uttered his more artistic and his more Italian self.

Let us now glance at the various formative influences under which Italian Art, and here more particularly that portion of it which concerns us this evening, rose and became supreme. Of these influences, the first which claims our attention, though one which was common to Italy and all the nations of Europe, is the great spiritual revolution which severs the ancient from the modern world, and has transformed the face of the countries of the West—I mean, of course, the revolution produced by the advent and triumph of the Christian faith. At what points did this great moral revolution vitally affect and mould the development and character of Art? For it is not

simply in the substitution of one class of subjects for another that we must look for those effects, but in a modification more profound and permanent. The Christian spirit could not express itself through the same artistic form as the spirit of pagan antiquity ; and the antagonism of these two spirits, as expressed in Art, made itself especially felt during those earlier centuries wherein the ascetic temper, which the Christian creed opposed to the corruption of the heathen world, was in the ascendant. Of the characteristics which the new faith stamped upon Art, the impress of this asceticism was the first and the most strikingly in contrast with the *ἡθoς* of ancient Art. For consider the spirit of the religion of the Greeks, of which spirit the quintessence is gathered up in the radiant beauty of their sculpture ; it was a joyous and an exulting spirit, full of the pulse of life, shunning the thought of death, little concerned with the pale Beyond which might await those whose hearts had ceased to beat ; a bold spirit, knowing no terrors, self-centred, and somewhat loveless ; it carried a belief that to be a god was but to be a more beautiful man, leading a yet fuller life with yet richer faculties and physical equipment, divine, therefore, only as being the ideal of a man in his comeliness, in his wisdom, and in his strength. It is evident that a serene and luminous embodiment of human perfections would be the natural artistic expression of such a spirit, wholly turned as it was towards

this life and the perfectibility of man within it and in reference to it only.

To this attitude the spirit of Christianity offered the completest antithesis. The faith of the Christian, drawing his gaze away from the present life, taught him to see in this fair world a temporary dwelling, a scene of trial only and of preparation ; lifted for him the veil of a life beyond the grave, towards the undying joys of which he was taught to strain his spiritual gaze—a life which was within the reach of all, and of which the alternative was everlasting punishment. Christians were taught that a fount unquenchable of love was poured out upon them from on high, a love binding them in a common bond of brotherhood, a love of which the reflection should go out again from each of them upon his fellow-men. He was taught, further, that the things of this world are a mirage and a snare, and the enjoyment of them culpable, a bar to the purifying of the spirit to salvation.

These doctrines, then, it became the function of Art to proclaim and to embody, and they were for centuries the sole theme of the painter and the sculptor. What a transformation is here implied ! All the old matter on which they had worked banished and branded ! The gods, the genial smiling gods, cast down from their golden thrones, though not, indeed, to their annihilation, for the gods of one religion are wont to become the demons of its successor. The great god Pan himself, the all-pervading spirit of the fruitful



earth, Pan with his "jolly Satyrs," is no longer heard along the mountain-tops ; his pipes are no longer "sweet, piercing sweet, by the river" ; he descends, Satyrs and all, with horns, hoofs, and tail, into the nether regions, to personate henceforth the Arch Tempter with his infernal crew, under which guise he duly reappears on canvas and carven gable, or maybe as a grinning gargoyle in the Gothic ages. The black dogs of Hecate assume his livery, and you have recently, in a place of entertainment not far from here, seen one of them figure as the forerunner of Mephisto in the cell, and at the bidding of Dr. Faustus of mediæval renown.

But with the glad gods fled for a time all the gladness of Art ; the divinely pathetic figure of the Man of Sorrows became the central object of its efforts ; and in the place of joy in the ideals of bodily perfection as the most faithful mirrors of the perfect human spirit, loathing of the body and its beauty, as of the vehicle of all temptation, a yearning for a life in which the flesh should be shaken off, a spirit of awe, of pity, and of love, became the moving forces that shaped its creations. The outward change was correspondingly complete ; the forms of classic Art were an embodied heresy ; and henceforth a gaunt ungainliness of form was to express the doctrine of the depravity of the flesh. Causes which we shall see at work eventually restored a truer balance and a clearer insight, but the influence of Christianity, if under

a more subtle and penetrating guise, did not cease to prevail in Art in the form of the spirit of human sympathy.

These considerations are, as I have said, of general application in modern Art, and are not therefore special to our subject. It was, however, impossible here to omit a brief allusion to them. Let us now narrow our attention to Italy, and particularly to that part of it which corresponds roughly to ancient Etruria. We have here, as always, to take for our postulate that unfathomable compound—the genius of the race. Of that marvellous race, bred, as it was, in an atmosphere of which the quickening purity was a boast of the Tuscans—*aria generativa* Dino Compagni calls it—great intellectual brilliancy, suppleness, and balance were characteristic. In these qualities the Florentines approached more nearly to the Athenians than, perhaps, any other people before or since their day; and they rivalled them also in their overmastering æsthetic sense, though that sense was of a wholly different complexion. I say overmastering, because it penetrated every fibre of their nature, and was a dominant impulse always seeking expression. Perhaps, as I have compared them in their mental gifts to the Greeks, I ought to hint at points of contact of a less satisfactory character—to a certain mutability of temper, for instance; they were a fickle folk, says Machiavelli, *varia e volubile cittadinanza*. And perhaps, also, I should glance at some laxity in

the matter of that virtue of truthfulness which this same Machiavelli vaunts so much in the Germans, but thought so unnecessary—not to say more—in an ideal Italian prince. The Greeks revered as almost godlike that Lord of Lies, Odysseus ; and a little touch from the pen of Vespasiano da Bisticci is not without suggestiveness in regard to the citizens of Florence. He is telling a story of Poggio Bracciolini : “Messer Poggio,” says he, “not knowing the nature of the Florentines, thought they were speaking the truth.”

So much for the race. It is no part of our task to follow its political vicissitudes before or during the centuries which are the frame of our subject. It is, however, essential that you should possess some notion of the general character of those vicissitudes, which are not without important bearing on the intellectual development we have to consider ; and although I would caution you against accepting the view of Sismondi, that government alone, and not race or climate, is the moulding agency in the formation of national character, and that *tout fut donné à tous*, you cannot do better than turn to that writer's authoritative volumes to obtain this knowledge. You will there read how in the towns which had survived the wreck of the Roman Empire, grew up free and strong communities, born of and welded by the necessity of resisting the frequent shock of barbarian onslaught and the raids of freebooters ; and you will at once note here, in the limited

scale of these communities, and in their freedom from the numbing sense of a colossal levelling mechanism of central power, one element making for that free expansion of the individual which was a central fact in Italian national development. And you will further discern, in the stimulating suggestion of past greatness which haunted the ancient walls of these once powerful cities, one of the circumstances which favoured the rapid growth of their inhabitants in conscious strength, and fitted them for the part of precursors, in the modern world. There also you will follow the growth of these free communities in every civic virtue, and you will see them reaching, before the middle of the thirteenth century, a level of prosperity and civilisation unknown in any other country. You will see them raising in their cities splendid edifices, sacred and civil, public and private, and carrying out great engineering works in their subject territories. And, as in external dignity of life, so also in Letters and in Art, you will see them in advance of the rest of the world.

Among these young commonwealths, Florence was the most conspicuous. Passionately tenacious of equality—a tenacity justified by the consciousness of widespread political capacity—the Florentines had flung themselves with ardour into every form of public life and every outlet of intellectual energy. Idleness was held by them in scorn. Every, or nearly every citizen was in some form or other engaged in business, and not the

burgesses only, but in many cases also the nobles. Meanwhile a nobleman, merely as such, was precluded from holding office; no one not a member of a guild was qualified to hold a public post. Dante was enrolled in the Guild of Apothecaries. Public functionaries were unpaid, and the magistrates were elected for their terms of service by lot from a list of qualified citizens. What an average of political aptitude is here implied! In this general stir of bracing civic life the genius of the Florentines had expanded on every side, and the harvest of this wide fecundity was reaped with full hands. In Art, Andrea called Pisano, though not a native of Pisa, Arnolfo di Lapo, Cimabue, Giotto, and a host of others placed, within the thirteenth century, the name of Florence on a pinnacle from which it has not been dethroned. In history the way was shown by the two Villanis and Dino Compagni; and, chief glory of all, in the midst of a group of minor singers, Dante Alighieri had tuned his lyre for the sublime song by which his fame was to resound unsurpassed through the centuries.

But the days of golden freedom were not of long duration in the cities of Italy; and once more I must refer you to the writers who have recorded their history, that you may learn how by degrees these communities, ever armed in strife one against the other, rent by faction within, and worn by ruthless civil feud, fell, one by one, under the rule of despots who by prowess, or by

craft, or both, had seized the reins of power, so that when in the fateful year 1494, the floodgates of foreign invasion were once again opened on Italy, to her ruin, a truly free people nowhere stood upright and intact to oppose its deadly inroads.

Among these Republics, Florence, where the democratic spirit had struck the deepest roots, was the last to keep a semblance of liberty ; and it was only by covert acts, and a rare blending of talent and cunning, that a great family of money-lenders, the Medici, gradually rose in the fifteenth century to a height of fame from which, without leaving the counter, it gave its name to an epoch, and, finally, flung gilded chains on the liberties of its native city.

The span of Italian history at which we have glanced contains, then, two epochs—that of the Republics, and that of the Despots ; epochs, however, which cannot be marked off by any common date, as some of the Republics forfeited their freedom much sooner than others. But if in the sphere of politics this span of time is marked by momentous changes, it saw, as we shall note, changes not less momentous and far-reaching in the domain of Art and Letters. The period embraced between the close of the thirteenth and the first quarter of the sixteenth century falls into three distinct divisions : The first is the age of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, an age of creative production ; the second, the age of the

first triumphs of the Humanists, one of reception and assimilation, for, as Voigt has well said, the humanistic movement was eminently a process of reception ; and the third, ushered in by Lorenzo Magnifico and Poliziano, once more a period of productiveness, spontaneous and national, but bearing the stamp of the revived spirit of antiquity. To this revival of the spirit of antiquity the name New Birth, or Renaissance, is given ; and as this great intellectual revolution profoundly affected the course of Italian Art, it is important that you should form some idea of the history of its rise and growth, and we will look at it first, for purposes of future comparison, in its bearing on literature.

Now I wish here to impress upon you a fact, in the light of which you will better understand certain divergences between the respective evolutions of Art and of Letters. The Renaissance movement is the result of two distinct currents of force. One was the spirit of intellectual revolt against the bonds of Scholastic Theology, and that extreme attitude of asceticism which saw in the flesh nothing but the devil, and especially regarded as a snare whatever in the outer world ministered to the æsthetic sense ; out of this revolt grew the rehabilitation of man and the emancipation of his intelligence ; and it inaugurated in all things the scientific spirit. The other motive force was the rekindled consciousness among the Italians of their past historic greatness,

and this reawakened sense led them to a passionate glorification of all that pertained to that past greatness, to an insatiate desire for the knowledge of the works and for the reconquest of the wisdom of their ancestors ; and not of their ancestors only, but also of that other people from whom those ancestors had themselves drawn inspiration—the Greeks.

(These two forces, then—the impulse to reassert the dignity of man and to rehabilitate the world, and a new-stirred consciousness of a great intellectual inheritance—were the elements out of which the Renaissance movement was compacted.)

These forces, it should, however, be added, if through a long period they had been fettered and restrained, had never been wholly inert. The spirit of protest against the extreme doctrine of the depravity of man had at no time been entirely silent, and through centuries, during which the pious raptures of the hymnologists had soared in solemn tones towards heaven, a voice of rebellious gladness had rung, defiantly enough, in the songs of the wandering clerics, the *Carmina Burana*. Neither, on the other hand, had the dim image of a mighty national past ceased altogether to glimmer in the memory of the people of Italy. Certain famous names had never wholly faded in the twilight of their minds ; up to the thirteenth century Boethius was held in odour of sanctity at Pavia, and Virgil, now as a saint and now as a wizard, had retained a hold on the popular imagination



from Mantua to Posilippo. Among the more learned a knowledge of his works, of those of Ovid, Juvenal, Cicero, and a few others, was kept alive, half apologetically, and Aristotle, or such an Aristotle as had survived translation, first into Arabic and then from Arabic into Latin, and liberal tampering in the operation, was held in high honour.

Up to the thirteenth century the language of literature was Latin ; Latin in its mediæval form was common to a Pietro Damiano and to the Goliardic Strollers. Within that century, however, the new tongue—the *lingua volgare*—became gradually the vehicle of poetic inspiration. In it St. Francis of Assisi poured out his infinite Christian tenderness ; in it Jacopone clothed his burning love of Christ ; in it Guido Cavalcanti and Cino da Pistoja sang of terrestrial love ; and in the “ Divina Commedia ” it received its highest sanction. Thus the same century, the century of Dante and of Giotto, saw the birth of a new Italian Literature and of a new Italian Art.

With Dante we reach the threshold of the Renaissance. He stands on the verge of the Middle Ages ; in him the old order ends. With Petrarch the new order begins. But it is not as a poet, not by the songs in which he embalmed the innumerable moods of an ideal love, that he moulded his generation, and opened the gates of a new era. It was by the audacity of initiative with which he pushed aside the veil that hung

over the pagan world, and led the way in an eager study of its intellectual production, and to a fearless appreciation of its greatness. He was the first Humanist, the first of those who, believing in the dignity of the unfettered human spirit, found the fullest manifestation of that spirit in the works of the great classic writers. From his early youth, Virgil and Cicero had fastened on his highly strung artistic nature by the stately cadence of their language, and it was at the streams of their eloquence that he drank that almost superstitious reverence for antiquity which coloured his whole life, and which he bequeathed to the generations that followed him. The accumulation of classic lore and its dissemination became the central pre-occupation of his life ; he travelled far and wide in quest of manuscripts, hunting them down in the dust and rust of convent libraries and cupboards, carrying off what he could, copying laboriously what he could not carry off.

But, together with every draught of ancient lore, Petrarch drank in, also, a quickened sense of glorious national heirship. Rome, now dethroned from her place of power, loomed in all his thoughts. We understand how irresistibly he was drawn to visit the widowed city where he was one day to receive, on the Capitol, the poet's crown ; we see him wandering, side by side with his old college friend, Giacomo Colonna, among those ruins of which the sight has so often wrung the heart of Italian patriots. But these witnesses of Roman

grandeur drew from him no tragic note like that which dominates the sublime invocation of Leopardi to his fallen country ; his pulses throbbed with hope ; he dreamt of the return of the ancient greatness, and shared, with ardour, in the ambitious dreams of that ill-balanced fanatic Cola di Rienzo. Nor shall we think it strange that the contemplation of so many glorious memories and of such a heritage of fame should have set on fire, in a mind of extraordinary vitality and unbounded self-trust, a keen desire that his fame also might survive in the memory of men ; and in a burning thirst for earthly fame, again, he was, as in so many things, the prototype of that host of Humanists which, even within his own time, sprang up under the rays of his enthusiasm.

If to Petrarch belongs the initiative in what concerns the lore and letters of Rome, to Boccaccio, his friend and pupil, belongs the earliest systematic promotion of the study of Greek ; through him a chair of Greek literature—the first—was founded ; and thus both the gates to the wonder-world of old stood open to the eager throng.

Of the great army of Humanists whose ranks grew and were replenished during more than a hundred years, it is, apart from my complete lack of quality to do so, needless that I should speak in other than general terms. What concerns us here is the spirit common to them, of which what little is left for me to say is only in ampli-

fication of what we have noted in the case of Petrarch.

I have spoken of the eagerness for the collection of manuscripts, of which he set the example ; this eagerness became almost a mania among the Humanists. Was an envoy despatched across the Alps on a diplomatic mission, his first care was to add, either by transcripts or by originals, to his store of texts. Others were urged in this quest by no motive but their learned curiosity. No dangers deterred them. Filelfo did not shun a sea voyage to Constantinople, though at the cost of a five months' sail between the Golden Horn and the Rialto. These men were in deadly earnest ; you have heard the story of Guarino, whose hair was bleached in a single night on hearing of the loss at sea of certain cases of books despatched to him from the East. Now, on these journeys their shrewd eyes took in many things about men and manners. Poggio, for instance, on his return from a visit to Cardinal Beaufort, had good stories to tell about English manners, notably about certain dull and lengthy dinner-parties to which he was bidden in our country. Cosmography, too, received a new impulse. Enea Silvio, afterwards Pope Pius II., has left descriptions of England and Scotland ; and I give it you on the authority of Villani that under the head of Vienna he is to this day quoted in Baedeker.

For various reasons the Humanists soon rose to great power and importance. Two subjects

absorbed their attention—one, which, from the days of Petrarch to those of Bembo, had a special fascination for them, was the art of writing letters; rhetoric was the other. An uncontrollable mania for the delivery of set orations exorbitantly long seems to have possessed them in the fifteenth century. Now, both these accomplishments gave to the Humanists a special value as state secretaries and political envoys; and accordingly, all the most prominent among them served, at some time, either at the Vatican, or at one, if not more, of the other seats of Government in Italy. Their services were jealously courted and highly paid, and the consideration in which they were held is illustrated by a saying of Gian-Galeazzo Visconti to the effect that Coluccio Salutato, the great Florentine Chancellor, was more formidable to him than a thousand horse.

Meanwhile, the humanistic movement, if it had set free the minds of men and grafted upon the new world the spirit of the old, had, for more than half a century a disastrous effect on original production, and, while it widened immeasurably the knowledge of Latin letters, for a time wholly thrust aside—for purposes of culture—the vernacular tongue. Latin for a time brooked no rivalry. The great Niccolo Niccoli did not fear to speak in terms of scorn of Dante himself for his use of the vulgar speech. "Leave him to the cobblers," he exclaimed, "and to the bakers, since he has chosen to write for them and for their like."

Petrarch, as a lad, had been soundly rated by his father for devouring Virgil instead of reading law. Within a century Varchi narrowly escaped expulsion from school for reading Petrarch in secret. But, while the language of the "Divina Commedia" and of the "Canzoniere" was spurned by the learned, the sweet Tuscan tongue still clung to the lips of the lowly, in popular ditties and in pious lauds, and throve and was handed down, till, in the second half of the fifteenth century, it was called again into the light by Lorenzo Magnifico, and burst forth ripe and ringing in the melodious verse of Angelo Poliziano, "the Lord of the Ausonian lyre," to reign once more in the writings of a Machiavelli and a Guicciardini, a Pulci, a Bojardo and an Ariosto, a Sadoletto, and a Bembo.

Let us now consider how far the general course of intellectual development which I have sketched out is reflected in the development of Art during the same period. The production, both in sculpture and painting, of the middle period of the thirteenth century has a character of transition. In painting, the works, for instance, of Cimabue and of Duccio are still impregnated with the Byzantine spirit, and occasionally reveal startling reminiscences of classic dignity and power, to which justice is not, I think, sufficiently rendered. In sculpture, the handiwork of Nicolo Pisano is full of the amplitude, the rhythm, and virility of classic Art. I see in it, indeed, the tokens of a

new life in Art, but little sign of a new artistic form—it is not a dawn ; it is an after-glow, strange, belated, and solemn. In the Art of Giotto and the Giottesques, the transformation is fulfilled. It is an art lit up with the spirit of St. Francis, warm with Christian love, pure with Christian purity, simple with Christian humility ; it is the fit language of a pious race endowed with an exquisite instinct of the expressiveness of form, as form, but untrained as yet in the knowledge of the concrete facts of the outer world ; an Art fresh with the dew and tenderness of youth, and yet showing, together with this virginal quality of young life, a simple forcefulness prophetic of the power of its riper day. Within the outline of these general characteristics, individuality found sufficient scope. Awe of the doom of the wicked, and a sense of inexorable retribution inspired, in minds of a certain stamp, works full of a Dantesque severity and force ; to others, militant Christianity and theological allegory furnished a grateful field. Local particularities of temperament were reflected in local artistic production ; in the work of the Florentines we trace that grave sobriety which so strongly marked them in the early days of their Republican freedom, and of which, later on, Angiolo Pandolfini was to draw an interesting picture. Among the Siennese, on the other hand, the love of splendour and luxury peculiar to them, translated itself in the gay profusion of gold adornments which, in their pictures, bespangled

and enriched the gorgeous raiment of their virgins, saints, and angels.

The main external characteristics of this early phase of Art, however, are, I repeat, a keen sense of the expressiveness of form, which translates itself in beauty and flow of line ; ignorance of the facts of Nature, resulting in drawing empty as well as inaccurate ; and, we must add, a complete indifference to landscape, with which, in fact, it deals symbolically rather than by imitation.

Soon, however, the agencies which were at work in the world of general culture made themselves felt also in Art. You will remember that I pointed out to you a twofold current in the intellectual evolution. On the one hand, a reaction against the fetters of monkish rule and the doctrine of the inherent depravity of humanity, together with a growing interest in man and in the phenomena of Nature ; and, on the other, an ever-increasing interest in the achievements of the pre-Christian ages, and especially the age of the supremacy of Rome. Now these two agencies merged to a great extent one into the other in the general intellectual movement ; but in Art, at least in the arts of painting and sculpture, for some lapse of time only one of them made itself felt—to their great gain—namely, the impulse to study man and the world he inhabits ; the impulse, in fact, to study Nature. The Humanists, in their almost superstitious reverence for the



masterpieces of classic literature, were pursued by the temptation to repeat, like parrots, words which clothed ideas not their own, and expressions which corresponded to nothing in their minds. The artists were more fortunate : of ancient painting nothing, of ancient sculpture little only, was before them ; and after the date of Nicolo Pisano that little seems for a considerable period to have exercised small influence on them. And so it happened that while men of letters were thrown into the pursuit of knowledge, which they found clothed in a perfect artistic form, at a time when their heads were, so to speak, hardly strong enough to carry the intoxicating draught, artists, unhampered by the crushing example of a past perfection, were flung, straight on to the bosom of Nature—where safety is.

Other circumstances also helped to shape their course. One of the most distinctive features in the economy of the Italian Republics was the free and unchecked development of the individual. The age was one in which every individual was gauged exactly according to his intrinsic worth ; every capable man got the full value of his capability ; to every capable man all things were open. Accordingly, the study of the individual forced itself upon the artist, and the acuteness of observation, which was innate in the Tuscans, became manifest in a marvellous subtlety in the rendering of individual character. Such portraits as those of Mellini and Palmieri, the medals of Pisanello,

and the frescoes of Masaccio and Ghirlandajo will at once occur to you. Whether they use the pen, the pencil, or the chisel, the Florentines of the Renaissance are unsurpassed in their vivid portrayal of individual men.

In its turn the scientific spirit took possession of the Arts. The once forbidden, now frequent, representation of the nude human form led to a desire for the knowledge of its marvellous mechanism and its secret structure. Anatomy, accordingly, was pursued with zeal. Perspective, too, was keenly studied, a science especially indispensable to men whose love of architecture as an adjunct to figures amounted almost to a passion ; it was no doubt, in great measure, the outcome of the haunting impression of architectural granduer produced in them by the sight, or by the accounts that reached them, of the stupendous ruins of ancient Rome. And in the train of perspective the cognate mysteries of foreshortening claimed their votaries, and exercised a fascination of which, indeed, the results were sometimes not a little ludicrous. The prophet of foreshortening was Paolo Ucello. There is in Florence, among other works of his that might be described to much the same effect, a battle-piece, in which a strictly foreshortened warrior and his charger—foreshortened for the last time, for they lie stark and dead in the forefront of the canvas and the fight—a horse kicking the spectator, and a pile of lances disposed upon the ground, with unblushing

intent to display the artist's science, have an altogether comic effect.

By the side of this scientific fever the joy in rediscovered Nature manifested itself in a new delight in landscape. The summary indication of earth and vegetation, which sufficed to the school of Giotto, soon gave way to an almost undisciplined exuberance of treatment. Who does not remember the riot of hill and dale, of tree and shrub, of vineyard and pleasaunce, of birds and beasts, in which, on certain walls of the Campo Santo of Pisa, Gozzoli, for instance, celebrated the joyous spectacle of the world? And when to this spirit of simple gladness is added the spirit of science of which I have spoken, we get such amazing studies of leaf and flower as Lionardo loved to draw. Thus to Tuscan artists the new movement brought the love of Nature and the light of science.

I have said that the revived classicism for some considerable period affected but little the outer form of their Art. It did, however, at an early date largely modify the subject-matter with which artists dealt. Mythology had laid a powerful hold on the Humanists. The objects of pagan and of Christian worship were mixed in a strange promiscuity within their minds. The attributes of heathen gods were given to the Almighty, of whom they loved to speak as Jupiter Altitonans—high-thundering Jove. But over the artists also the heathen fables cast their spell; gods and goddesses, satyrs and fauns, dryads and nereids,

invaded their fancies and once again impelled their hands ; and pagan myths took their place in the studio by the side of Christian verities, objects of equal homage.

You foresee, however, that under Tuscan pencils these pagan themes will assume a thoroughly changed complexion ; and it may be interesting to compare, in passing, one with another, by a special instance, the treatment of kindred subjects by a Florentine painter and a Florentine poet. Some portions of the famous picture of Spring, by Botticelli, in the Gallery of the Belle Arti in Florence, recall certain stanzas in the "Giostra" of Poliziano so vividly as to suggest that the painter must have had them in his mind when he conceived the picture. Yet, see how wholly different they are in the order of emotion they evoke ! How luminously joyous, how serenely sweet, and, in this sense, how classic is the sentiment exhaled from the music of Politian's lines ! How full of twilight and of subdued strange sadness is this loveliest of Botticelli's works ! The matter is classic, the spirit modern and Christian. The Renaissance has laid a stronger grip on the poet than on the painter.

But, as is natural, the action of this complex movement on artistic development varied in its conflict with the mediæval spirit, according to the human stuff on which it worked. Before the close of the fourteenth century the exclusively religious and didactic phase of Art had spent itself. The

days were past when the doctrines of the Faith, its comfort and its terrors, the science of government and the precepts of morality, spoke to the masses, in unripe but lofty artistic language, from the walls of church and council-chamber. Giotto had clothed in forms of Art the spirit of St. Francis, and had gone to the grave. Simone Memmi, the champion of militant orthodoxy, hot with the fire of St. Dominic, and the far greater painter Ambrogio Lorenzetti, whose solemn frescoes in the Communal Palace of Siena are a great sermon on the virtues which build up the well-ordered State, both these had ceased to live ; and now a period had begun in which worldly subjects and classic mythology were to invade Art ; a period in which it lost for a time much of its ethical elevation, but during which the nourishing elements of knowledge were being eagerly absorbed and assimilated, which alone could equip it for its final and its highest triumphs.

Yet even when the flood-tide to which Petrarch had opened the gates of mediæval civilisation was, as it seemed, sweeping everything before it, the old flame of religious fervour was not everywhere spent. Even in the middle of the fifteenth century you might, turning aside from the turmoil of the streets of Florence, have seen, in his silent cell, a pious monk, absorbed in his work, catching no echo of the outer din, gazing with rapt eyes on a world of love and ecstasy, the radiant creation of his own pure and reverent soul. And if the

ecstatic spirit survived in Beato Angelico alone, perhaps, in this undimmed serenity, the graver spirit of religion, the Christian sadness, still touched and tinged the mind of a Signorelli, a Botticelli, a Perugino, cast a tender light over the first youth of Raphael Sanzio, and at last found its fullest expression in the sublime creations, and its saddest cry in the rugged sonnets of Michael Angelo Buonarroti.

But perhaps the various operations in the province of Art of the two main motive forces of the Renaissance—the impulse towards the scientific study of Nature, and the impulse to reinstate the classic spirit—may be best illustrated by more special reference to the work of three typical artists whom I have already named—Lionardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michael Angelo. Of the scientific impulse we see the fullest expansion in that miracle of many-sidedness—Lionardo. A never-sated hunger for knowledge in every form, a desire, ever burning, to lift up the veil from every secret of creation, possessed and marked him through life. The hidden mechanism of the bodies of men and of animals, the structure of plants, the ways of rushing waters and of wandering winds, and every riddle in the book of Nature were objects of his ardent curiosity and unwearied study. How far beyond the horizon of his day his prescient spirit carried him, along the fields of science in which Art is not involved, others, better than I, can tell you. But we cannot, in this

strange man, separate the scientific investigator from the artist. In his moody and fitful spirit, unrestingly straining forward in the quest of some intangible, new perfection, it was the same haunting sense of mysteries unsolved that led him, now towards scientific prophecy, and now to the creation of a type of human beauty more subtle and complex than any the world had seen before.

The influence of the revival of classicism, both in its spirit and as a form of æsthetic expression, is seen at its meridian in Raphael. To him the knowledge of such masterpieces of ancient sculpture as were brought again to the light in his day, came when his precocious gifts were already about to reach maturity; and their example found a fruitful soil in his singularly well-poised genius, filled as it was with a stately sense of beauty and chastened by a mind of rare refinement. Whatever was best in the classic spirit was absorbed and eagerly assimilated by him, and imparted to the work of his best day that rhythm, that gentle gravity, and that noble plenitude of form which are its stamp, and proclaim him the brother of Mozart and of Sophocles.

In these two artists, then, we see the afflatus of the Renaissance in two distinct forms—in its avidity of research with Lionardo, in its classic serenity with Raphael. It remains for me to speak of one, the greatest, far, of all, on whom, as an artist, the old world had no direct hold or influence, though it coloured his intellect by blend-

ing into his Christian orthodoxy some tinge of that Platonic mysticism which, since Marsilio Ficino first taught it, had fascinated the choicest spirits of the age. I speak, of course, of Michael Angelo. ~~His~~ contact with the Renaissance as an artist is traceable only in the scientific spirit and its interest in man; for to Michael Angelo the artist, who saw in the human form a dim reflection of the Divine beauty—man was the all-absorbing and exclusive object of study. All else was indifferent to him; to him a plain mass of green or grey sufficiently signifies the earth. Only once, and because the subject—the temptation of Eve—demands it, does a melancholy-looking trunk, with a few leaves, intrude into his work to represent the green glory of the forest. Giotto himself is not more scornful of its charms. And this I wish you to note of Michael Angelo, as distinguishing him from Raphael: the type of human form which he lifted to the fullest expressional force is the last development of a purely indigenous conception of human beauty, whereas the type which we know as Raphaelesque is a classic ideal warmed with Christian feeling. Sublimely alone as Buonarroti's genius stands, towering and unapproached, like some unscaled, heavenward mountain-peak, it does but mark the highest summit reached, in the magnificent continuity of its evolution, by the purely native genius of Tuscan Art. Reaping, with full hands, all the knowledge of his day, and conscious of its worth,



Michael Angelo flung that knowledge as fuel into the furnace of his mediæval ardour, and in him we see, at the height of the Renaissance, the supreme type of a mediæval artist ; yet, be it remembered, a type which without the Renaissance could not have been. As firm in his faith, and of a soul as high, he was the spiritual son of Dante, and his peer ; a Tuscan, a Christian, and, in the language of his Art, an immortal poet. In his grave the Art of Tuscany was buried ; no flower grew over it. When he died, in 1564, one Florentine of genius was still alive, wild Benvenuto, to whom a short span was yet allowed. For a few years longer a Venusti, a Bronzino, a Daniele da Volterra remained to show how dull a thing Art may become when the soul has gone from it and rhetoric replaces feeling. For a few years yet good Giorgio Vasari, King of Chroniclers, strutted in garments which he believed to be his master's, and then final night closed over the Art of Florence. The light of Italian Art passed from the valley of the Arno to Venice, the city on the sea.

One last point, and one, I think, not without interest for us as artists, has to be here briefly noted. It is a remarkable fact that whatever noxious influences crept in under the cover of the humanistic movement fastened far less on the Art than on the literature of Italy. In its first incentives that movement was wholly worthy and pure. Petrarch nourished none but noble ideas, and in

his dreams wisdom ever waited on virtue. For some time the character of the revival was one of simple joy in a newly-discovered world, of passionate curiosity concerning the broad field of knowledge which the widening dawn was daily revealing, of exultation in a new consciousness of recovered dignity. Soon, however, the seeds of mischief were seen to germinate. The indiscriminate deification of all things classic led by degrees to a widespread loosening of Christian belief, and, in the absence of anything to replace it, often to a complete disintegration of the moral nature. Everything, no doubt, conspired to turn the heads of the Humanists—the keen competition among the great to obtain their services; the unbounded admiration entertained for their acquirements. Does not Vespasiano tell us of a young Spaniard who, being sent by his king to visit Leonardo Bruno, flung himself at the feet of the sage in a paroxysm of reverence? Their belief and boast that fame and shame were in their giving, and that with a drop of their ink they could make or mar a man—these things, I say, conspired to breed in them, gradually, a pride and a license which knew no bounds. Shaken in their own faith, and unsustained by the moral tone of a Plato or a Virgil, they absorbed indifferently, with the artistic beauties, the moral blemishes also of some of the less pure among the Roman writers. The example of Catullus or of Martial was, in the eyes of a Poggio, a Filelfo, and a Beccadelli, a shield and a

justification for the untold foulness in which they would, on occasion, vie one with the other. And what controlling influence was there about them? Did not Guarino—venerable Guarino—defend the elegant filth of Poggio? Was not Filelfo received with open arms by that worthy Pontiff Nicholas V? Or, indeed, where was the moral atmosphere so tainted as within the Curia? Where was morality more shamelessly trodden under foot than within its walls, against which the scathing wrath of Savonarola went up in vain? "This obligation," bitterly exclaims Machiavelli, "this obligation we owe to the Church and to the priests—that we have become void of religion, and are bad." What an atmosphere was that in which a Filelfo—nay, even an Aretino—did not think it outrageous to aspire to the Hat? What corrective was here furnished to men already so prone to laxity and indulgence?

It must not, it is true, be forgotten that some of the foremost spirits of the Renaissance were marked by the highest moral tone. Who was more pious, who conceived more nobly of the dignity of man, than Pico, Christian and Platonist? What is more elevated than the words in which Baldassare Castiglione, through the mouth of Bembo, discourses of ideal love? What more venerable image can we evoke than that of Fabio Calvi, whom Raphael loved as a father, or of Niccolo Niccoli, or of Manetti? What more admirable picture has biography put before us than

that of old Vittorino da Feltre, teaching side by side, under his own roof, the sons of powerful rulers and the sons of the poor and lowly—the latter for the love of God? And other names might be added to the number. But it is not the less true of the great mass of the Humanists, that in the days of the middle life of Michael Angelo, their profession had become a synonym for corruption, and their contact a taint in the eyes of decent folk.

How different a spectacle is afforded to us in the field of Art! The Renaissance was to it a new birth, indeed, and profoundly affected it; but affected it, in the main, to its strengthening, never to its ethic degradation. By the reinstatement of the study of Nature it gained a precious source of life and health, and an ampler tenement was given to it, in which its soul could move at ease. The material on which the new spirit impelled it to work often lacked, it is true, the moral elevation of that which had inspired the Art of Giotto and of Lorenzetti; but if, as in literature, the world of pagan myth engrosses the canvas here and there, if more of the love of life and less of contrition breathes in it than heretofore, how dainty and how decent is the mirth, how pure and free from every taint the joy of life appears! I call up before my mind, in bright procession, the profuse treasures of Etruscan Art, and in vain I look, in all that varied pageant, for one unwholesome work. Rather, I see in it dignity, throughout

unfailing ; often a vein of sadness ; here and there, among the most impressive of its triumphs, a male severity and a sublimity of strain such as had not winged Italian poetry since the death of Dante. In the most joyous of them I find the limpid beauty of Poliziano's lines, and in the humblest something of the grace and tender charm of that sweet, spontaneous undergrowth of verse which has from a remote time not ceased to perfume the humbler paths of Tuscan Literature—the Ballate, the Rispetti, the Stornelli. These things I see in Tuscan Art, of which it may be said, as truly as of the Art of Greece, that whatever was highest and purest in the spirit of the people from which it flowed found in it a faithful image and an adequate expression. Let it be our care, my young friends, that one speaking at some future time of this our English Art may say a like thing with equal truth.

**ADDRESS**

**DECEMBER 10TH, 1889**



## STUDENTS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

I have in successive addresses from this chair asked you to consider with me how, amongst various peoples, the character and current of artistic production has been influenced by surrounding conditions, material, moral, and intellectual; and in the development of this inquiry, Italy, you may remember, occupied our thoughts when last we met. I propose this evening to put before you some reflections on the Art of a people once closely bound up with Italy, and belonging to the group of so-called Latin races—the Spaniards. I say advisedly “so-called,” for the name always seems to me to be in some degree misleading, and nowhere more so than in the present case. The country of the Celtiberians was indeed, after long and strenuous resistance, subdued by Rome; it bowed to the laws and assumed the tongue of the conquerors, receiving also, no doubt, some considerable admixture of their blood; it accepted their civilisation, enriching it in turn with bright reciprocated gifts of genius; with Seneca’s wisdom, with the song of Lucan, with Quintilian’s eloquence; and Bilbilis, which gave to Rome’s soldiers their sharpest blades,



tempered also the yet keener wit of Martial : nay, conquered Spain gave in due time masters to her masters ; Trajan and Hadrian were her sons, and in the veins of Marcus Aurelius ran Spanish blood. But whatever traits may have marked the race that occupied the soil of Spain before the Empire of the West crumbled and fell, the people which in the fifteenth century first appears on the stage of history as a political unity under Ferdinand and Isabella, shows, to my thinking, but faint traces of Latin kinship, and offers, as we shall presently see, the most thorough contrast to the Italians of the same period.

Nor need this surprise us, for seldom was a race, if the Spaniards may be spoken of as one race, composed of elements more heterogeneous. Let us see what these elements were. The earliest inhabitants of Spain known to history were the Iberians ; who these Iberians were, whether or not they were one with the race whose descendants survive in the Basque Provinces, is an interesting question which we fortunately are not here concerned to answer. It is sufficient for our purposes to know that in remote times already the occupants of Spanish soil bore that name, and that we have to regard the Iberian stock as the underlying element of the various amalgams which, together, make up the Spanish nation. To this basis was added at an early date, in all but the eastern region of Spain, a large infusion of Celtic blood, whilst in its eastern and southern provinces,

Greeks, Phœnicians, and Carthaginians contributed yet further foreign elements. Rome, in her turn, as I have already reminded you, laid strong hands on the Spanish land, absorbing the conquered country into her Empire, and retained her grasp on it till the beginning of the fifth century—the epoch of that great migration of the Germanic peoples which so deeply modified the ethnic constitution of Europe. At this period the Visigoths, a warlike race, pushed southward into Spain, and, brushing aside gradually the enfeebled sway of Rome, sat down and fastened finally upon the soil. Thus was founded a powerful State embracing the larger portion of the Peninsula, and a wide tract in the south of France—a State having for its royal seat Toulouse, and in Toledo a centre for Spanish politics. With the advent of this Gothic race the modern history of Spain begins. And in their union with the Celtiberian people we may see the source of much that is distinctive in the Spanish character as future ages were to reveal it. Under the Gothic kings bigotry and intolerance rose and throve unchecked, and laid broadly the foundations on which the Inquisition was one day to rise ; under them also ripened that haughty jealousy of temper which, raising up every man in strife against his neighbour, was destined to prove through centuries the bane of an heroic people.

But another element, yet, was to be added to the rich compound of the Spanish race, and this

element was furnished by those African tribes which, first seizing on Spanish soil 400 years after the advent of the Goths, swept on, at once and unresisted, with the swiftness of a rising tide, till they had covered and submerged the land from the Mediterranean to the Asturian Hills. A conquest pregnant with far-reaching results: for while the great and famous kingdom founded by the Moors shed, during its first centuries of prosperity, the light of a high culture over a wondering world, handing on to modern nations the torch of the wisdom of the ancients, the metal of Spanish character was to be fused and welded in the fiery struggle to cast off their yoke. Arab rule had been carried at one bound from the Guadalete to the glens of Cangas. The tide which bore it filled long centuries with its intermittent ebb. Its poise was of only brief duration. The war of deliverance in which the Spaniard never paused or swerved through over 700 years began almost on the morrow of the planting of the northern boundary of the Moorish kingdom. The seventh year after the fight by the vineyards of Xeres saw its first heroic deed. Issuing from the Cave of Covadonga, "the cradle of Spanish freedom," Pelayo the Goth hurled, in that year, on an eventful day, a handful of resolute men on the Arab hosts, and struck the first link from the chain of Spanish enslavement. The signal once given, warriors, springing to arms on all sides, gathered to his standard, and the nucleus of a

fighting State was soon formed. Pelayo's grandson already saw himself master of a realm reaching from Galicia to the Douro ; within two centuries this dominion had broadened into a Kingdom of Leon, which, in the thirteenth century, was further extended under Ferdinand the Saint by union with Castile. How in the fifteenth century Castile and Aragon, the two most powerful States in the Peninsula, were, by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabel, united never to be again divorced, you know ; you know, too, that one of the first fruits of this union was the final expulsion of the Moors, and the crowning of the long and bloody labour of Spanish liberation.

And here you will at once note one of the main causes of that deep and radical difference which divides the development and character of the civilisation of Italy from that of Spain. Italy, indeed, was wrung not less than Spain with intestine feuds ; but whereas the history of Italy during the period of her greatest intellectual vitality was, for all the splendid prowess of her sons, the history of a repeatedly invited foreign yoke—a running record fatal to national consciousness—the annals of Spain up to the end of the fifteenth century are the recital of one long, stern, and finally triumphant struggle to shake off an alien master—a story of constantly growing and intensified national consciousness and national pride.

But to return for a moment to the Moors. It

is not to be expected that a people so brilliant and so chivalrous should have left behind it no traces of its rule and presence beyond the faded walls of mosques and palaces ; and, indeed, such other traces are many and indelible. Innumerable Arab words enrich the Spanish language ; the very war-name of the great national hero, Ruy Diaz de Bivar, the Cid, was given to him by Moorish lips. Wherever in Spain we see the blessing of abundant water spread like a silver net over the face of the land, wherever mills are busy along the streams, we acknowledge the craft and science of the Moor. In Andalusia we see the trace of the Moors in the blood of the people, in their supple grace, in the Eastern glow which suffuses their poetry ; in this garden of the Hesperides strange, plaintive chants, and dances weird and serpentine, still breathe the spirit of the East ; the jasmine still haunts the fragrant courts of Cordoba, and the carnation, which is the soul of Eastern ornament, is, in the song of Andalusian singers, the typical flower of beauty. The Muslim brought and bequeathed to Spain the giving of alms and the courteous treatment of the mendicant ; he brought, also, two other things—religious tolerance and a wholesome devotion to the bath ; the first of these, at least, he did not, unfortunately, implant there. In Art, too, the Arabs left many a mark behind them ; many an Eastern form and feature is found adopted in the architecture of Spain—the ajimez window, for instance, a type of dainty elegance,

the deep architraves of their circular-headed doors, their woodwork, their treatment of plaster, and their decorative use of tiles; nay, indeed, a new style, the Mudejar, was built up of Muslim and Christian forms. We have, however, this curious fact to note, that whatever of Eastern elegance and charm was absorbed into the Andalusian nature, found little, if any, expression in Spanish Art; that spirit of exquisiteness which breathes in every work of Arab hands was ever foreign to the Spanish artist.

Now, the component elements of the Spanish race being such as we have seen them, and the cardinal fact of its historic evolution such as I have in a few words indicated to you, what was the national temper which was engendered in it? and how did that temper affect the general development of Spanish culture?

In considering Christian Spain we have broadly to distinguish, apart from the Andalusians, between two peoples of very opposite character: the Castilians, the dominant race, and the Catalans, a hardy, bustling people, jealous (to this day) of its racial individuality—an individuality into which much less of the Celtic, and more of the Roman and Punic, element is combined with the Iberian stock than is the case with any other member of the Spanish family—a people long united politically with its neighbours north of the Pyrenees, with whom it had a literature in common, and customs of which even in our time a trace survives

in Valencia in the "jocs florals," the ancient poetic contests in which flowers were the victor's crown. One chief difference which in spirit separated this people as by a gulf from its Castilian neighbours will not surprise you in men dashed with Carthaginian blood. It is this, that whereas to the true Spaniard the taint of trade was deep dishonour, to the Catalan barter was the obvious business of life. He bought and sold, and thought no more shame of his bargain than did the Italian traders across the water who shared with him the marts of Alexandria, and who gave to the world, without thought of incongruity, their silks and their woollens, their Dante and their Michel-Angelo. I have already pointed to certain historic circumstances which had their part in shaping the stern Castilian character, but it is not to such circumstances alone that we must look for its sources; and if no people was, during the lapse of many centuries, more visibly tempered in the current of its history, neither was any race from the outset more definitely moulded by surrounding material conditions than the inhabitants of Central Spain. Let us look at those material surroundings.

Imagine a vast table-land raised high on the shoulders of great chains of hills, and stretching across the Peninsula from the Biscayan provinces to the Garden of Andalusia. Imagine this region, in great part of its extent, alternately scorched by fierce suns and swept by icy winds, parched and

treeless and without the song of birds ; its blistered soil, seldom soothed by the grateful shadow of a cloud, blotched here and there with stunted shrubs, strewn with bleached boulders as if of great mountains shaken into fragments—a gaunt spectacle, but not without much melancholy grandeur ; and you see before you the cradle of the Castilian race. Frugal, rugged, resolute, shrewdly practical, a people could not fail to become, whose days and seasons were spent in continued struggle with such conditions of soil and climate ; and such in fact was the race which, in the fifth century, the fighting Germans found on the high Spanish plains, and which, subsisting side by side with them in probably only partial fusion, furnished its share in those strange contrasts which we shall have occasion to note in the Spanish character.

In how different a region was the lot of the Andalusian cast ! On every side a land lovely as Paradise was spread before him ; a grateful soil, rich and red, fed first by the waters of noble rivers, and later also by the science of the Moor, yielded in profusion every fruit of the earth. Here the vine wreathed over the sunny acres, and the dusky olive in serried ranks diapered the rolling hills ; here the orange vied with the crowned pomegranate, the date-palm lifted its fiery lamps into the blue ; here the lips of every mountain stream were rosy with the oleander's bloom. Such was the contrast between these two regions—the one a land of love and



song, the other a fit cradle for conquerors and ascetics.

Let us now, fixing our eyes on this latter land, the land north of the Sierra Morena, consider more closely the distinguishing features of the Spanish character as evolved under the conditions at which we have been glancing; and first, we have to lay hold of this central fact: that for seven centuries the Spaniard was a *Crusader* within his own land; we have to conceive him with his sword-hilt ever in his grasp, the Cross ever before his eyes, and within his breast the ever-burning thirst to wash in the blood of the heathen at once the shame of his conquered country, and the stain of his outraged faith. His sword is consecrated, his ideals as a soldier are hallowed by religion; he strikes in the name of Christ; the Patriot and the Catholic are one; Country and Faith are twin conceptions in his mind, paramount and exclusive. And it is only in the light of this fact that we can understand the history of this strange race, the protection extended to the Inquisition by Isabel the Catholic, than whom no nobler sovereign ever graced a throne: the Inquisition itself, Torquemada, Philip, Alva, can only be rightly judged with this fact before our eyes. The end and aim which to the Spaniard hallowed every act was the glorification and spread of his faith in its untainted purity. The significance in the eyes of Isabel of the discovery of the New World was mainly that it extended to another hemisphere the sway and

lordship of the Cross. The fervour of orthodoxy inspired in Spain the highest flights of poetic genius, and found its loftiest and most characteristic expression in such plays as "La Vida es Sueño," "El Principe Constante," and "La Devocion de la Cruz" of Calderon; whilst in the region of Art it was, till the days of Velasquez, the one exclusive inspiration. Impelled by it, men of letters and artists entered in numbers into holy orders; thus, to name only a few, Lope de Vega went into the Church at the age of forty-seven; Calderon became a Canon of Toledo; Tirso de Molina was a monk; Juanes took the vows as a Franciscan; Alonzo Cano had his stall in the Cathedral of Granada. Again, seeing in what honour fighting was held among the Spaniards, we are not surprised, amongst them, to find the sword often in hands which the pen has immortalised. Gentle Lope sallied forth with the Armada that was to crush, in British seas, the enemy of his faith; Cervantes fought at Lepanto; melodious Garcilaso fell, a youth, on the field of battle. Altogether fiery, powerful, very human persons were these Spanish poets—fighting, praying, loving, and writing immortal verse. Very human, I say, and here we touch on another Spanish trait. As a knight and as a Christian, your Spaniard was an idealist, but *only* as a knight and as a Christian; by the side of the Goth, if I read the matter rightly, you have in him the Iberian; by the side of aristocratic ideals, you

have a strain of practical shrewdness and clear-eyed common-sense ; by the side of Don Quixote, immortal Sancho, the realist, with his sententious saws and racy sayings. Meanwhile, one quality was common to the whole race, and from it the Spaniards gathered the greatest of their peaceful triumphs. The delight in action which necessity, the rigours of their soil, and the stern discipline of their early history had bred in them, bore fruit in its turn, in a vivid sense of the reality of things, a stirring interest in human doings ; the sense of the dramatic, in fact, which dominates the whole range of their intellectual production, the craving to see rehearsed before their eyes or their minds, the deeds and the adventures of their forefathers and their fellows. Of this appetite, the earliest outcome was that magnificent burst of ballad poetry in which the Cid is the central figure, the Romancero ; and the next, a dramatic literature of the highest order, intensely national, independent, of prodigal fertility—a dramatic literature in which, by the side of a transcendent fervour of piety and a chivalrous ideal such as no other country offers, we have the most vivid pictures of Spanish life, handled with amazing power and pungency ; and throughout as great a freedom from Aristotelian scruple about the unities as in our Shakesperian drama ; yet a freedom not due to ignorance of classic precepts ; on which head Lope de Vega mixes wisdom with much humour in a poem called “El arte nuevo de hacer

Comedias." And here, again, in the possession of a national Drama, we mark another feature in the contrast between Spain and Italy. But, with this keen relish for the spectacle of human action, a strong and uncompromising realistic tendency was not unnaturally bred ; and by the side of the heroic dramas and religious plays which gave scope to the ideal and mystic impulses of the Spaniard, we get not only the class of plays called "de capa y espada," in which not kings and exalted personages, but simple gentlefolks, bring their intrigues and duels on the stage ; but in prose a whole category of tales known as "Novellas Picarescas"—such, for instance, as "Lazarillo de Tormes" or "El Gran Tacaño"—wherein description of the lowest and most disreputable classes, in all the wild picturesqueness of their twofold filth, is carried to the last extreme of realism. In all these fantastic narratives lurks also a delightful spice of humour, another Spanish quality which flavours, with many other virtues, that popular poetry wherein Spain is so rich, and in which, as in all popular song, we seem to lay our ear on the very heart of the humble folk whose voice it is. Tenderness and passion we find in these "coplas" and "refranes," if not the exquisiteness of the "rispetti" and "stornelli" of Italy ; we find playfulness at times, and at times tragedy and black despair, often a glow of Eastern imagery, a frequent strain of piety, much humour, as I have said, and now and then an amusing

jumble of feelings not obviously kin ; whereof I cannot refrain from giving you an instance that seems to me characteristic as well as droll. A youth is invoking St. Sebastian : " Oh ! glorious Sebastian," he exclaims, " pierced through with many arrows ! would that thy soul were mine ! would that thy body were—my mother in-law's ! "

Now, the characteristic features which we have just noted in the Literature of Spain, we shall find also in her Art. To that Art it is time to turn. The subject is one on which, as far at least as Painting is concerned, it is no easy task to speak, partly because a large and important category of Spanish Art is, as we shall see, surrounded with almost complete obscurity, and partly on account of the strangely exaggerated estimate of Spanish painters of a certain period which has been allowed to gain currency. As far as English readers are concerned, two works are especially responsible for this state of things, one a book of unsurpassed charm and brilliancy, which has long passed from the hands of the tourist to the shelves of the lover of Literature—I speak, of course, of Richard Ford's " Handbook " ; the other, a work of great elegance and much research, but, in its too indiscriminate enthusiasm, a very unsafe guide—Stirling's " Annals of the Artists of Spain." A valuable corrective to the teaching of these two works may be found in an attractive book published last year in Germany, called " Velazquez und sein Jahrhundert," by Carl

Justi—a sound and trustworthy piece of work, in which the school is more judicially dealt with than in the case of our two distinguished countrymen.

Now, viewing Spanish Art as a whole, according to the knowledge we possess of it, what is the final impression we gather from it regarding the æsthetic organisation of the people who produced it? To me it seems to be this—that it is the expression of a great and masculine race, fervid in temper, perhaps, beyond any other, but with little creative artistic impulse, little sensitiveness of artistic fibre; a race possessed with noble instincts and lofty ideals, but ideals solely ethic—æsthetic ideals are entirely wanting among Spaniards. And this view we shall, I think, find substantiated on closer investigation. We shall see, for instance, that the Art of Spain was, at the outset, wholly borrowed, and from various sources; we shall see heterogeneous imported elements assimilated sometimes, in a greater or less degree, frequently flung together in illogical confusion, seldom, if ever, fused into a new, harmonious whole by that inner welding fire which is genius; and we shall see in the sixteenth century a foreign influence received and borne as a yoke—because no living generative force was there to throw it off—with results too often dreary beyond measure; and, finally, we shall meet this strange freak of nature, a soil without artistic initiative bringing forth the greatest initiator—observe, I do not say the greatest artist—the greatest ini-

tiator perhaps since Leonardo in modern Art—except it be his contemporary Rembrandt—Diego Velasquez.

Let us now glance briefly, and in order, at the fortunes of the several Arts in Spain; and first let us consider its Architecture. The limits of our time must necessarily restrict me to the merest outline of our subject. We are, however, concerned not so much with special examples as with general phenomena of artistic evolution, and these may, I hope, be made fairly clear without excessive elaboration. Fortunately, also, those who desire further acquaintance with the Architecture—at least with the Gothic Architecture—of Spain, have access to it in the work of an artist of genius and a man of learning, in whom the Academy, not long ago, lost an honoured member, Mr. Street. In using his work, nevertheless, you must make allowance for a vehement impatience of whatever does not fall within certain forms of Art, and must not be unduly terrified by the word “Pagan.” You will there read how from the earliest times a foreign influence was stamped on the work of the church-building Spanish race, an inspiration, sometimes Romanesque and sometimes Byzantine in character, sometimes Aquitanian and sometimes Burgundian; Lombard Italy, too, we shall find here and there contributing a feature. In Leon we see, later on, a cathedral more purely French in character and design than any other in Spain; yet later, German elements,

especially in ornament, are everywhere met. Finally, the Renaissance movement, to Italy the source of her highest achievements, but to Spain a baneful influence enough, asserted itself here as elsewhere. Now you have observed in this summary enumeration that the dominant influence in Spanish Architecture up to the sixteenth century was French, and this early French supremacy will not surprise you when you consider that the boundary of Spain was not then, as now, the Pyrenean range, and that the Spanish clergy was largely recruited from France. I call your attention to this circumstance as contrasting with the preponderating influence of Flemish Art which we shall note when we speak of Spanish Painting, and as marking the absence of any definite indigenous impulse. And of this want you will be made further conscious when, on closer examination of the chronology of Spanish Architecture, you mark the simultaneous erection of buildings denoting in their character different periods, and when you see details of different and antagonistic styles picturesquely but incongruously elbowing one another in the same edifice, and become aware of the absence of any such continuous and organic development of a style as you witness, for instance, in the Gothic Architecture of your own country. Nevertheless, while the Spaniards lacked the originating impulse in Art, their ecclesiastical architecture was even at an early date often beautiful and always striking. Palomino—



pious man!—lays down in his “Museo Pictorico” a proposition concerning the origin of Art in Spain which may here find a place, a proposition, however, on which you may feel disposed to suspend your judgment in the absence of further evidence. “St. James, the Apostle,” he says, “when he came to preach Christianity in Spain, brought with him a number of images, the work of the glorious Evangelist St. Luke; although those,” he continues, “which were carved or in the round were, it is said, from the hand of Nicodemus, tinted, only, by the Evangelist, of whom authors affirm”—and here, in a note, a long array of Patristic authority—“that he was only a painter, though I see no difficulty in his having been a sculptor also.” Well, whatever may be the extent of our direct obligation to St. James, we owe to him indirectly the earliest of the great Cathedrals which are the just boast of Spain, the Church of Santiago de Compostella, the work, however, not of a Spanish, but of a French architect, and, in fact, the twin design of St. Sernin at Toulouse. A cast of its famous “Portico de la Gloria” is familiar to you at the South Kensington Museum. I have drawn your attention to the fact that we much miss in Spain any definite process of architectural evolution; an exception should, however, to some extent be made in Catalonia, where a local style of pointed Gothic was formed of a distinctive and striking character. Again, there is in Castile a group of churches in

which the addition of external open arcades—sometimes, as in the case of San Vicente at Avila, on one flank, sometimes, as in the churches of Segovia, on two—has the happiest effect, and may be said to constitute a type proper to this region. And it should be added that the Spaniards, whatever their æsthetic limitations, seized with an incomparably more powerful grip on the Gothic idea than ever did the Italians. I know of few things more curious than the absolute inability of the latter—the most shrewd and subtly gifted people of their day, and saturated with the artistic sense—to grasp the spirit of Gothic Architecture. Certain Gothic forms, indeed, they adopted; they pointed the openings with which, in obedience to their native instincts, they sparsely pierced the broad spaces of their walls; they made liberal use of crockets and unmeaning pinnacles; they accepted the vault, which is called the formative principle of Gothic building; but to the seed of life that lay in the principle of the vault they remained blind. An organism sustained by the balance of living forces, clothed in forms arising out of and expressing its constructive principle, and enriched with decoration emphasising it, must not be sought at the hands of the Italians; indeed, in the matter especially of external decoration, the use of the style seemed at times to paralyse their wits; for let no delight of mellow marbles, no glamour of age, no perfume of pleasant association, blunt your sense to the unfathomed foolish-

ness, for instance, of their too frequent treatment of the façades of churches—witness amongst others that of San Michele at Lucca, which, towering by a third of its height above the building it masks, fitly expresses the *vertical* division of that building by innumerable rows of small colonnades piled in *horizontal* profusion one on the top of the other. Well, though you do not find in Spain the superbly logical development of this Frankish style that characterises the country of its birth, you do find the Spaniard alive to its vital conditions, and treating it as a plastic, malleable thing; and you find him further imparting to it—for good or for evil—a strong impress of his own idiosyncrasy. The churches which mark the first centuries of the partially recovered independence of his country are instinct with the gloomy fervour and the masculine sobriety of his race. I know no two churches in any land in which this quality of masculine sobriety has more powerfully impressed me than the Cathedrals of Tarragona and of Avila. The former is artistically the completer work in its more perfect balance of vigour and elegance, of unadorned spaces and enrichment; but it may be doubted whether the church in Avila with its apsidal end carved bodily out of a bastion of the old town wall is not even more impressive.

The simplicity of these early churches is, of course, missed in the churches raised or completed during the days of heightened national self-con-

sciousness and greater material prosperity, and gives place often to an unpruned exuberance of ornamentation in which the craving for the excessive—a craving, unchastened by restraint of delicate taste, which was rapidly becoming a distinctive Spanish attribute—is strikingly displayed. We feel, however, that if in their sacred edifices the Spaniards fell into decorative incontinence, they were prompted in part at least by the impulse to give without stint whatever they thought their best to the exalting of their faith; and if their tendency to extreme enrichment led to regrettable excesses—to the abuse of gold, for example, and to absolute orgies of gigantic bosses, of flaming crockets, and of exorbitant armorial bearings—we owe to it a decorative feature unique in its kind, always striking, and often of great splendour—the Retablo. These structures, rising tier upon tier from the back and flanks of the consecrated table, present in their blending of Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting a decoration sometimes no doubt barbarous, but often in a high degree impressive. To this tendency also we owe the development of the Rejas, the noble metal screens which in a Spanish church close not only the choir and the capilla mayor, but also every recessed lateral chapel. These screens, frequently admirable in design, rich and elegant in form, and judiciously relieved with colour and the precious metals, are an absolutely original creation of Spanish Art, and conspire with the sumptuous

retablos to give to Spanish cathedrals that gorgeousness of aspect in which all others lag far behind them. But if the churches of Spain are gorgeous in their aspect, their splendour is often tempered with a solemn gloom. The *withholding* of light seems to me to have been an object of study with the Spanish ecclesiastical architects, for it would, I think, be a very superficial view to regard the darkness of their churches as aiming solely at shady coolness. And I must, even at the risk of seeming fantastic, believe that, under an impulse both characteristic and poetic, this gloom was occasionally produced and gathered up with definite intent to enhance the mystery of the sacrifice at the high altar. In the Cathedral of Barcelona, a church in which, according to Catalan custom, the lights are very restricted, a lantern is raised over the western bay of the nave, which bay, being made square in order to carry the octagon, is, of course, larger than the others. The result is that the worshipper, entering from the west, finds himself in a broad illuminated space, beyond which, as his gaze is drawn on towards the capilla mayor, brooding shadows seem to increase and thicken, intensifying that deep solemnity of coloured darkness which marks this church amongst the most impressive even in Spain. Nor is this the only instance I could quote of a similar effect produced, as I must believe, intentionally.

But I may not linger unduly over one branch

of my subject, and, with a few words on the effect of the Renaissance movement in Spain, I will pass on to other topics.

This movement resulted first in a style known as the "Plateresque," the silversmith's style, which bore fruit in some very picturesque if not very pure specimens of Architecture, but did not supersede the intricate half-German Gothic at that time in force. On the contrary, the two styles jogged on side by side, often by a friendly compromise, and in most admired confusion, on the surface and in the structure of the same building. Later on a more severely classic style began to assert itself, but never with results wholly satisfactory; its efforts were frequently feeble, and generally unscholarly. One artist, Diego de Siloe, sought in a vast cathedral to blend classic forms with Gothic construction, and those who wish to see what disastrous results may attend such an attempt in the hands even of a capable man are referred to the Cathedral of Granada. On the other hand, if you would see how much a man of mediocre gift, obeying, perhaps unconsciously, the spirit of his age, may embody of that spirit in a pile of stone, you will be inclined to view with more interest than is generally vouchsafed to it by artists the Palace-Convent of the Escorial. A huge, forbidding block of buildings, turning a blind, blank back on the world which seems to stretch out indefinitely below it, raised on a slope hemmed in on three

sides by an amphitheatre of barren rocks, admitting light through fewer and smaller openings than ever pierced so large a surface, rigorously bare of any adornment, it seems to me to gather up in its expression the very essence of crushing, silent, inexorable tyranny. When in due course the "Rococo" in Art began everywhere to reign, the Spanish itch for the excessive seized on it with avidity, and in the Palace of the Marques de dos Aguas, in Valencia, you may see the supreme effort of its most insane vagaries.

And now, having glanced at the spirit of the Architecture of the Spaniards, let us turn to their Sculpture, a form of Art wherein, as was natural in a people without æsthetic ideals, or delicate sense of form, their achievements never reached the highest level, and in which, on the other hand, that strong realistic impulse, which we have seen to be so powerful with them, exercised a fatal influence. This tendency is sometimes startlingly manifest in the carved ornament of their buildings. I have seen on a porch of the fourteenth century a string of roses copied from nature with absolute realism, and flung haphazard along the hollow of a moulding. Nevertheless, the bane of realism did not lay complete hold on the higher forms of Sculpture till a later period, and if there is in the earlier work as a rule little refinement of workmanship or dignity of style, the vitality of the Spaniard and his dramatic sense have full scope in it. Whatever may be the character of its purely

artistic inspiration—whether French, Flemish, or, may be, Italian—a marked originality of dramatic treatment is constantly found in it, and with it often a warm touch of pathos and humanity. I have at this moment in my mind a certain most striking sepulchral monument of the fourteenth century at Zaragoza, in which a row of stumpy ill-wrought little figures is made delightful by the spirit of pathetic tenderness which breathes through it. As another instance of poetic feeling I would quote certain angels in the spandrels of the north porch of Barcelona Cathedral. Clumsily composed enough within a trefoiled panel, and wholly barbarous in workmanship, their purely artistic value is *nil*; yet as they leap out from the wall, flinging their heads back and upwards, turning rapt, yearning faces with ecstasy towards Heaven, whilst they sing and strike their lutes, they seem to fill the air with their soaring song of praise. The hand that carved them was without cunning, but the mind in which they were born was the mind of a poet.

Of the Sculpture produced in Spain in the fifteenth century, the most marvellous examples known to me are the retablo and the tombs which adorn the Cartuja at Burgos. These works, the masterpieces of Gil de Siloe, are miracles of ingenious intricacy and delicate workmanship, and withal extremely fine in design. They are, however, absolutely German in character, and can therefore only be regarded as sources, not as



specimens of Spanish Art. It is, indeed, sought to establish a claim of Spanish nationality for the elder Siloe, but these works, apart from their Germanic character, imply, in my opinion, a training and an artistic inheritance not to be looked for in Spain in those days. In another branch of Sculpture again, to wit in their gurgoyles and grotesques, the Spaniards found a vent for their sense of the humorous. Quevedo, drawing in his "Gran Tacaño" a group of *truands* which might have moved the envy of Victor Hugo, and dwelling on the fantastic postures they assumed, says that Bosch himself (the Flemish artist) had never painted their like. The Spanish satirist does here scant justice to his countrymen; indeed, for quaint and genuine humour in their conception of a grotesque (and by this word I do not mean a combination of, say, an ostrich's egg, a teapot, a pair of spectacles, and the legs of a fowl, such as passes muster amongst Flemish painters, but a real, organic, conceivable monster) your Spaniard seems to me to excel most other folks.

I spoke just now of the sumptuous retablos which form so marked a feature in Spanish churches. It is to them I think, in large measure, that we have to trace during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the peculiar development of Spanish Sculpture, the greater part of which has wood for its material. A few Spanish Sculptors, it is true, worked in marble, but none rose to a

high degree of excellence. Alonzo Berruguete, indeed, a pupil of Michel-Angelo, has a great reputation, but one which his lumbering and mannered works assuredly do not justify.

The two most famous monuments executed in Spain in the Renaissance period are, perhaps, the royal tombs at Granada, and that of young Prince Juan in Avila. They are, however, the work of foreigners.

But to return to our retablos. These elaborate storied structures, of which the South Kensington Museum is fortunate in possessing a most interesting early specimen, were sometimes, as in this case, a mere framework for paintings; more often, however, they were filled with carvings in low or high relief. These sculptured pieces, which were intended to affect the worshipper in the same way as the painted scenes, but, through their relief, with a greater vividness, were invariably painted with the most absolute realism in regard to hair and flesh-tints, and were in the draperies made resplendent by elaborate and profusely gilded patterns. Now, reliefs so treated were obviously far more effective with the crowd, as objects of worship, than the flat painted surfaces which they to a large extent superseded; the Scripture subject, the episode from the life of a tutelary saint, assumed in the eyes of the devout a bodily reality which rivetted their gaze and stirred their emotions; and accordingly we see the relief and scale of these representations growing constantly

bolder, till the figures, detaching themselves wholly from their background, reach, and indeed sometimes exceed, the size of life. At last we find entire scenes from the New Testament—such, for instance, as the Descent from the Cross—standing out bodily to the whole depth of the group, rising above the altar, but blended, so to speak, with the retablo by means of intermediate figures in diminishing relief, merging in their turn in a modelled landscape. It cannot be denied that, sobered and toned as they now are by the smoke of several centuries, these groups have about them a certain dignity; nor, indeed, that some of them—the works, for instance, of Roldan, a sculptor of the seventeenth century—show considerable force and ability, though marred by clumsy forms and theatrical gesture. Realism, so dear to the Spanish nature, came more and more to be regarded as a main excellence in Art; and a form of Sculpture was, as we see, developed which, even when redeemed to some extent by the refinement of a Montañez and the dignity of a Hernandez, could in the very nature of things never rise to the highest levels. One more name should be mentioned before leaving this branch of our subject, mainly because its bearer has been described as the Spanish Phidias—the name of Juan de Juni, in whom Cean Bermudez suspects an Italian, while Palomino calls him, with more probability, a Fleming, and of whom, without denying to him a certain power, I will briefly say

that he is the most turgid contortionist (this Phidias) whose work it has been my fortune to see. A willing exponent of the more offensive sides of realism, he surpasses himself in a figure of the dead Christ at Valladolid, a spectacle of gore and decomposition which I refrain from describing. It is, however, right to add that this coarse enhancing of the tragedy of the Atonement by the display of wounds and blood, commended itself to natures of more dignity than belonged to Juni, and a figure of the Saviour on the Cross by Gregorio Hernandez, a pious ascetic, much given to self-flagellation and penance, exhibits all the appearance of a victim of the Inquisition after the worst horrors of the rack.

So far we have seen the natural temper of a keen and strenuous race manifesting itself unmistakably in its Plastic and Architectural Art. Let us now, in conclusion, see how far its Painting tells the same tale.

And here at once we find a formidable difficulty lying across our path, for an impenetrable mystery hangs over the history of Spanish Painting till the end of the fifteenth century. A not inconsiderable catalogue of names has, indeed, been handed down to us, and in a few cases a signature or a document enables us to connect one or the other of them with a particular work; but beyond this, all is more or less vague conjecture. The invasion of Italianism in the sixteenth century had the effect of blotting out, so to speak,

all that had been till then achieved. Before the end of the century everything in Painting that was not Italian in its inspiration, or bore the marks of the old Northern tradition, was repudiated as barbarous, with the result that to this day the great majority of the paintings of the fifteenth century which enriched the churches or cloisters of Spain, are indifferently and half contemptuously tossed over to the category known as the "Escuela Flamenca." I cannot but earnestly hope that in view of the great interest and of the remarkable merit of many of these nameless or misnamed paintings, some learned Spaniard may be impelled to unravel for us, as far as possible, this perplexing riddle; to bring to light a wealth of work of which much must be indigenous, and whatever is not Spanish is more or less Hispaniolised, and thus redeem from neglect and oblivion the names of men whose labours confer more real honour on their country than those of many whom the blind traditions of a vitiated taste have forced on the world's too facile acceptance. I say "Hispaniolised," for it is the peculiarity of this powerful Spanish race that it steeped in the indelible dye of its own idiosyncrasy whatever was wrought in its midst, so that it is often almost impossible to pronounce whether a work is due to the hand of a Spaniard, or to a foreigner stamped with the Spanish seal. Whatever of Pictorial Art may have been produced in Spain previous to the fifteenth century,

very little indeed of it has been preserved, and that little, as far as I have been able to observe, mainly in Catalonia. In the specimens I have seen of the work of this period a remarkable tendency, already, to intensity of tone and vehemence of colour has struck me, a quality which is universal in Spanish Art up to the sixteenth century. With regard to the foreign influence that may be traced in them, it would be difficult to generalise with confidence. When, however, we reach the end of the fifteenth century, our task, though still a delicate one, becomes much easier. Of French influences it may, I think, be broadly said that outside Catalonia they are mainly traceable in the northern region of the Peninsula ; so, for instance, some extremely remarkable frescoes, or rather ghostly traces of frescoes, in the cloisters of the Cathedral of Leon, and a picture by the same hand in the Sala Capitular, adjoining that church, point, in my opinion, clearly to the inspiration of France. On the other hand, I should confidently claim for them Spanish authorship ; on this head their rugged originality and force, and the bluntness to beauty, not to say more, which is manifest in them, leave me no sort of doubt. Again, in the work of that admirable Catalan artist, Luis Dalman, the same inspiration is at least mingled with that of Flanders. Of the influence of Italy, although, as we know, Starnina, and, later on, Dello, amongst other Italian artists, resided in Spain, I find, beyond certain frescoes at Toledo,

but few traces. Flemish example, on the other hand, was paramount. In Castile at this period it was, in fact, in a manner official. Three Flemish artists were, according to Justi, employed at the Court of Isabel Catolica, where also Cardinal Mendoza for a time, and after him his successor, Ximenes, zealously encouraged Art. Not only were Flemish painters patronised in high places, but Flemish works of art were largely imported into Spain, and a wholly Northern, Gothic character was stamped on the Spanish school. Men of vigorous personality bowed submissively to the yoke. Pedro de Cordoba, Sanchez de Castro, Fernan Gallegas (if the works tentatively assigned to him are his), Alejo Fernandez himself, proclaim in every stroke their debt to the Low Countries; nevertheless, here also a strong racial spice and flavour was in every case added to the Flemish basis, and we are tempted to wonder, with something of regret, what new development might have ripened in Spanish Painting if it had known how to withstand an influence so foreign to its instincts as that of the Italian Renaissance. Most conspicuous among these Gothic painters is in my eyes—and I am not forgetting the Catalan Dalman—the artist to whom I have last alluded, Alejo Fernandez. In Santa Ana in Triana, at Seville, you may see a Virgin and Child from his hand, which in its splendour of tone and general majesty of aspect is a work of a very high order. An exception, perhaps, to the general rule of Flemish

affiliation may be noted in a striking series of pictures in the Madrid Gallery, assigned to Pedro Berruguete, the father of the sculptor, which, though strongly Spanish in spirit, are Venetian rather than Flemish in tone and aspect, roughly, indeed, reminding us of the works of Carpaccio.

Let us, before dismissing this phase of Spanish Art, compare it for a moment with the Art of contemporary Italy. First, then, we see that the Art of Italy, being purely vernacular, displays an incomparably greater suppleness and variety of expression than can be found in Spain. Such contrasts as are suggested by the names, say, of Fiesole and Verrochio, of Lippino and Carpaccio, of Mantegna and Leonardo, to speak of men who lived in the same half-century, have there no parallel. Nevertheless, in certain qualities which are common to all works in the respective countries, we have the materials of a comparison. In Spanish Art, then, we are conscious, in the main, of the utterance of a more fiery race—a race with more dramatic instincts and of a gloomier faith; and we see the fervour of its temper translating itself almost uniformly in a glow and gravity of tone, and a certain pomp of colour such as we find in Italy only among the earlier Venetians. Of any ideal of form, on the other hand, or of any sense of exquisiteness, we vainly seek a trace. The Spaniards had neither the suave serenity nor the high stateliness of the Italian quattrocentisti; but then neither did they ever fall into a certain



languid elegance from which the Tuscans, at least, were not wholly exempt. But the most significant contrast between the Art of Spain and that of Italy is seen in the effect on them respectively of the spirit of the sixteenth century. Under its impulse Italian Art put on a greater amplitude, and rose to a higher majesty; Signorelli became Michel-Angelo, Perugino blossomed forth into Raphael, for the rise of the Renaissance spirit was in Italy an organic evolution. But to Spain that spirit came as a contagion from without, and as a blight. Under it the simple directness of the earlier days was for a time obscured; and a dreary mass of work was thrown upon the world, dull, often, without dignity, and academic without real scholarship. Yet it is important to observe that even here the national accent, as I will call it, was never obliterated. The foreign influence was assimilated by various individuals with varying results, and, throughout, the personality of each painter remained unmistakable and distinct. Whatever may be our estimate of such men as Pablo de Cespédes, Juanes, Morales, Vargas, Roelas, or El Mudo, the personal distinctiveness of their works cannot be challenged. To one Spanish painter alone did Italy bring unquestionable gain—namely, to Ribera, a powerful artist, very incompletely known on this side of the Pyrenees. Meanwhile, in the most Italianising days, the sturdy, rugged Spanish spirit was not dead in every breast; nay, indeed, it burnt with even, in

some respects undue, vehemence in the bosom of a certain iracund and turbulent individual called the Elder Herrera, one little commendable as a man, but interesting here, not in that, as some would have it, he was the creator of the more modern Spanish school, but that he more stoutly perhaps than any other resisted the foreign spirit and handed on the old territorial grit and temper. It was, by a grim irony of things, in the handiwork of this man's son that the most extravagant and debased form of pseudo-Italian mannerism was reached. Old Herrera is said to have been a harsh and brutal parent : let us not forget that he had seen his son's pictures ! His real spiritual successor—though in fact never his pupil—in so far that through him the true Spanish genius was transmitted, was Zurbaran, a man of whom we have in this country but little knowledge, a painter of conspicuously powerful personality, in whom, more than in any of his contemporaries, the various essential characteristics of his race were gathered up—its defiant temper, its dramatic bent, its indifference to beauty, its love of fact, its imaginative force, its gloomy fervour, its poetry, in fact, and its prose. Ribera was, as an artist, an Italian ; Alonzo Cano was an eclectic with a Spanish accent ; Murillo the unequal, now entrancing us with the fused glory of his tones, now repelling us by harshness and commonplace, was truly Spanish no doubt, but had neither the imagination nor the sustained virility of style of the son of the peasant

from Estremadura, the completest representative in Art, I think, of the genius of his race.

For a long period Italian Painting did not cease to enjoy the favour of the Court ; it ceased, however, towards the beginning of the seventeenth century to exercise that paralysing influence which had marked its first advent ; and the ground was cleared for a new impulse from within. At this conjuncture a man of commanding genius and fearless initiative was given to Spain in the person of Diego Velasquez. It may perhaps have surprised you that with such a name before my mind I should have spoken of Zurbaran, a man so vastly his inferior in the painter's gift, as perhaps the most representative of Spanish artists. I have done so because beyond any other artist he sums up in himself, as I have pointed out to you, all the complex elements of the Spanish genius. In Velasquez, Spanish as he is to the finger-tips, this comprehensiveness is not found. Of Velasquez all was Spanish, but Zurbaran was all Spain.

Viewed simply as a painter, the great Sevillian was, as I have just said, vastly the superior of the Estremeño. He was in more intimate touch with Nature, and none, perhaps, have equalled the swift magic of his brush. On the other hand, depth of feeling, poetry, imagination were refused to him. The painter of the "Lanzas," the "Hilanderas," the "Meninas"—works in their kind unapproached in Art by any other man—painted also, be it remembered, the Coronation of the

Virgin and the Mars of the Madrid Gallery—types of prosaic treatment. In one work, indeed, Religion seems for a moment to have winged his pencil; but striking and pathetic as is his famous Crucifixion, it does not equal in poignancy and imaginative grasp the presentment of the same subject by Zurbaran in Seville. But if we miss in Velasquez the higher gifts of the imagination, we find him also free from all those blemishes of extravagance which we have so often noted in this land of powerful impulses unrestrained by tact. Whatever gifts may have been refused to Velasquez, in his grave simplicity he is unsurpassed. If fancy seldom lifts him above the level of intimate daily things, neither does she obstruct for him with purple wings the white light of sober truth. In days in which the young Herrera could find favour; in a country in which Churriguera was possible, and euphuism was applauded, he never overstepped the modesty of Nature, nor forgot in Art the value of reticent control. I have not here to follow his career, nor the evolution of his unique and dazzling genius. Still less need I, before young artists of the present day, dwell on the wizardry and the luscious fascination of the brush of this most modern of the old Masters. I will only, in conclusion, touch briefly on one or two points that are of interest, and one that is, perhaps, of warning.

First, I would notice the purity and decorum of his Art, a decorum not, I think, due to the charac-

teristically Spanish laws under which the Inquisition visited with heavy penalties every semblance even of impurity in a work of Art, but to a spirit dwelling in the people itself, of which those laws were but the somewhat exaggerated expression. It may be worth while also to note that yet another virtue of the Spaniards is, in one of his works, reflected in an unexpected manner, namely, their sobriety. It is a curious thing that in a certain class of Spanish Literature a peculiar relish is shown for the portraying of moral squalor and the grovelling criminality of social outcasts. In Spanish Art, on the other hand, the picturesque alone of low life seems to have sought expression. You know what gentle Murillo made of his melon-eating beggar boys. Again, you saw not long ago upon these walls, in the "Water Carrier of Seville," how at the outset of his career Velasquez turned his thoughts to subjects drawn from humble life, and you know how to the end he dwelt with peculiar gusto on the fantastic physiognomy of the privileged buffoons, dwarfs, and *hombres de placer* who haunted the Palace in his day. You know further that one of the most powerful works painted by him before reality of atmospheric effect had become his chief pre-occupation, and when he sought exclusively after truth of character, a picture known as "Los Borrachos," represents a group of drunkards doing homage to Bacchus. It is a work of the most naked realism. Bacchus (Dionysos!), showing in

his repulsive vulgarity what a blank to Velasquez was the poetic side of classic myths, is surrounded by a circle of kneeling rascals, rude and ragged enough, and supposed, no doubt, to be carousing ; but here is the strange peculiarity of this work—in spite of all the accessories of a revel, and the flash of grinning teeth, we are unable to persuade ourselves that any one of the disreputable crew could ever be *drunk*. Imagine the subject treated by a Fleming !

And now, though I am loth to touch one leaf of the laurels of so dazzling and so great an artist, I cannot pass in silence a circumstance which must be weighed in estimating Velasquez as a man, and which is not without bearing on his Art. The virtues of his race, as we have seen, purified his work and gave it dignity ; a Spanish foible, though it could not dim his genius, cramped no doubt and curtailed its production, namely, a tendency to subordinate everything to the pursuit of royal favour. I said a Spanish foible ; for a superstitious rendering up of will and conscience to the sovereign, such as is, I believe, without example, had long been a growing characteristic of the Spaniard. On a memorable occasion Gonzalo de Cordoba himself, one of the noblest figures recorded in Spanish history, a man of a mind so fearless that he was bold to rebuke Pope Borgia himself face to face in the Vatican for the scandals of his life, did not scruple to break, in deference to what he considered this higher duty of obedience to his

king, his solemn pledge and oath to the unfortunate young Duke of Calabria. So all but divine did majesty appear to the Spaniards that divinity and majesty became almost as one in their eyes, and they spoke, in all solemnity, as "Su Majestad," not only of the Divine persons of the Trinity, but also of the sacrificial wafer. The prevalence of this feeling must plead to some extent in mitigation of the tenacity with which Velasquez canvassed—with success, alas!—to obtain at Court a post of an onerous and wholly prosaic character—the office of "Aposentador Mayor," a sort of purveyor and quartermaster, who, when his Majesty moved from one place to another, had to convey, to house, and to feed, not the sovereign only, but all his suite—a post demanding all his attention, says Palomino, who goes on to deplore that this exalted office (which he has just told us any one could fill) should have deprived the world of so many shining samples of the painter's genius. We shall agree with our sententious friend not, perhaps, in the satisfaction he derived from the honour conferred, as he imagines, on his calling, but in his sorrow over the loss we have sustained! And in the sight of canvases in which the execution of a sketch is carried out on the full scale of life we shall at once bow before the product of a splendid genius, and regret the signs of haste, the evidence of too scanty leisure, by which its expression has been marred. Truly has it been said, "Art requires the whole man."

And now I must conclude, and I do so with more even than my usual consciousness of a task inadequately performed. The picture I have traced before you is crowded inevitably, and I fear to confusion, and yet much has been omitted which might have helped to its better understanding had time furnished me with a larger canvas. It must suffice to me if I have in any way stimulated you to the further consideration of a deeply interesting chapter in the history of Art—a chapter which, if we read it aright, teaches us this lesson : that nations not less than individuals may, by the insincere pursuit of what is foreign to their temper, be turned from the true path of their artistic development, and may also by sincerity be righted and restored.





**ADDRESS**

**DECEMBER 10TH, 1891**



STUDENTS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

Pursuing the subject which I have for some years past proposed to myself in these addresses to you, namely, the relation between artistic production and its surrounding conditions, I dealt with it, you may remember, at our last biennial gatherings, in connection with two members of the so-called Latin group—the Italian and the Spanish peoples. I purpose to-night to complete our survey of that group by speaking to you of its third member—the people of France. The task is one which I approach with no small misgiving ; in the first place because, the evolution of the artistic genius of the French having been uninterrupted from the days of Charlemagne to the days in which we live, an account which shall stop short, as this account needs must, on the threshold of modern times, can offer but a mutilated picture ; and in the second, because that genius, which is in the very life-blood of the race, has found vent over so wide a field that it is not possible within the limits of an address, even though I draw largely on your patience, to do more than indicate in the most summary manner the forms it has assumed, and the fruit it has

borne. Indeed, I shall be forced to lay stress on one form only of its manifestations, touching but incidentally on others ; and the topic on which I shall chiefly dwell is one which plainly imposes itself by its paramount interest.

Vast, indeed, is the field over which the creative genius of the French has been active ; not architecture, sculpture, and painting have alone absorbed its energies ; every form of industrial production has furnished material for its exercise, and has received its stamp. But among its nobler manifestations there is one—its achievement in architecture in the Middle Ages—to which France owes a position of pre-eminence that until the present century she could not claim in either of the sister Arts. Fortunately for our inquiry there is nothing from which we may learn more of a race in its days of spontaneous artistic production than its expression in architecture. Famous and considerable sculptors the French have assuredly had at all times ; their school of carvers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was brilliant and beyond example fertile ; the Renaissance gave them men of high mark, and even in the artificial days of Louis XIV, they had at least one sculptor of true and powerful genius ; but high as was the average of their achievement, they nowhere in the exercise of the plastic art reached those summits in which the loftiest imaginative quality is married to consummate artistic power. In spirit the nearest approach to that level was seen in the

mediæval days, when, however, the knowledge of the human form was still unripe and inadequate. During and after the Renaissance period, mannerism mars, too frequently, work else in many ways admirable; the element of dignity is often wanting; the grave solemnity, the majestic sadness which breathe, as from the verse of Dante, in the recumbent guardians of the Medicean tombs in Florence would be sought in vain in the whole range of the sculpture of the French. In painting, also, in the past—for I remind you that the present century, with its magnificent outburst of artistic production, is outside the scope of this address—in painting, I say, they reached a high standard; but in this form of art, again, we are not lifted out of ourselves by their greatest achievements as we are—how frequently!—by the works of Italian Masters. Where is, here, the haunting charm of Lionardo; where the large serenity of Raphael; where the ardour of Titian's colour; where the weird force of Tintoretto's fancies? These things we look for in vain. In architecture, on the other hand, the French have a supreme claim on our admiration; for on the very dawn of modern days they conceived, and evolved with an unerring certainty of logical procession, and with a swiftness surpassed only by the sudden ripening of Greek sculpture in the fifth century before Christ, a style of architecture based on a principle wholly new, not only differing from but directly opposite to that which had governed

the builders of Rome and Athens respectively, a style which spread rapidly and triumphantly over the whole of Western and Central Europe, and which has in its unity, its flexibility and its varied splendour, found no peer since the days of its decline. I mean, of course, the style which, more rightly spoken of once as "Frankish," "*opus Francigenum*," is now known by a name given to it at first in scorn, the "Gothic" style. To the evolution of this style and to its gradual supersession in the sixteenth century under the influence of the revival of classic feeling, I propose to devote mainly to-night such few considerations as the limits of our time admit.

But first let us glance at the composition and at the home of this great unrestful, initiating race. It occupies a broad and fertile region blessed with a temperate climate, fanned on three sides by the breath of the sea, favoured with bright skies and a light keen air which quickens the wit and gladdens the spirit. In this land is bred a mercurial light-hearted race—one, now, and united, but built up of varied elements, and for a long time fiercely divided within itself. What are these various elements? As far back as sure knowledge reaches—for of those earliest artists, the aboriginal cave-dwellers, but little can be known—we find the country unequally divided between Keltic tribes and an Iberian race, which latter sat on the slopes of the Pyrenees and was spread over the Spanish Peninsula. Now the Keltic tribes which occupied

respectively the north and centre of what was one day to be France, represented, speaking broadly, two successive immigrations ; the earlier that of the Gauls, the later that of the Kymri ; and these two tribes, or groups of tribes, furnished different elements to the national character, the Gaul being the more mercurial and indocile—" *le Celte indocile*," Michelet calls him—the Kymri more staid and open to discipline. Along the southern seaboard the ubiquitous Phœnician, need it be said, set up his counting-houses, penetrating thence to some distance into the interior. Greeks, too, traded with and colonised the region known to us as Provence, founding Phocæan Massilia in the sixth century before Christ, and if they have left behind them no tangible relic of their sojourn, they exercised that spiritual influence which they ever brought to bear on those with whom they came into contact.

Till the middle of the first century before Christ, however, no important infusion of foreign blood came to modify the characteristics of the Keltic races, a riotous folk whose exuberant vitality was ever driving its hosts like a wayward torrent to and fro over the face of the world. We see them in a remote past bursting through the Iberians and pouring across the Pyrenees into Spain ; we see them driving the Siculi before them in Italy, and founding an Empire, of which the name still survives—Umbria, the land of the Ambrons. Later they set the torch to the Imperial Capital



of the world ; they pillage Delphi ; the Danube echoes with their war-cry ; the plains of Troy are alive with their tents ; the shores of the Baltic know them ; in the sands and cities of northern Africa their presence is felt ; their span is from Galway and Galicia in the West to far Galatia in the East.

It was in the sixth century before Christ that this fighting race first came into conflict with its future masters, the Romans. In the first century it succumbed after a fierce struggle to its mighty foe, and was absorbed into the Roman Empire ; and eagerly embracing the Latin civilisation—a civilisation already, indeed, planted in the south of Gaul by the Roman settlements of Narbonne and of Aix—gradually abandoned its native tongue and thus identified itself with the Imperial people. As might have been expected, the Gauls soon rose, through the brilliancy of their natural parts, to a high level of culture and to a position of influence in the State ; and it is noteworthy that they displayed already then special aptitudes which have not ceased to characterise them. They shone as skilled physicians, as fluent orators ; they shone in letters and on the stage ; Gauls sat in the Senate, they rose to the purple ; Claudius, Antoninus Pius, and Constantine were Gauls. But if this people contributed a striking element to the life of the Roman Empire, it shared also in the gradual exhaustion and decay of that once overshadowing fabric, and when in the fifth cen-

ture the Germanic hosts began to press on them from the north and east, they could oppose no valid resistance to the advance of the new comers, and sank before them into subjection and slavery.

Early in the next century Clovis the Frank, a ruthless rascal, having got rid, by force or by fraud, first of a rival Gothic tribe, and then of some inconvenient relations, founded modern France; and this final settlement of a Germanic element on Gallic soil, an element which came to represent official France, if I may so call it, and, imposing its foreign name for all time on the land, not only exercised a vital influence on its history, but modified necessarily the racial characteristics of the vanquished people. However much for some time the haughty and barbarous Franks may have held themselves aloof from the subject Gauls, a fusion of blood gradually took place, and it is, beyond doubt, to this eventual fusion that is due that particularly happy complexion of genius that we shall presently see at work precisely in that region in which Frankish rule was, from the first, most firmly rooted. Thus the genius of Keltic France was early fed and strengthened by foreign elements: "Toutes les races du monde," Michelet finely says, "ont contribué pour doter cette Pandore." Nevertheless we must not lose sight of the fact that the Gallic stock, of which an unquenchable vitality is the primary characteristic, remained, in numbers greatly superior to the foreign infusion, though

probably the estimate of Amédée Thierry, that nineteen-twentieths of modern Frenchmen descend from them, must be taken with much reserve ; the Gauls never in their thralldom forgot their blood, and in the great upheaval of 1789 the old undying, smouldering consciousness burst into lurid flame. "For more than thirteen centuries," says Guizot, "the conquered people had struggled to shake off the yoke of the conquering race ; our history is the history of that struggle ;" and this duality within the French race is the key to much that is perplexing in the evolution of its intellectual life.

Well, what are the main characteristics of this Gaulish people ? They are a love of fighting and a magnificent bravery, great impatience of control, a passion for new things, a swift, brilliant, logical intelligence, a gay and mocking spirit—for "to laugh," says Rabelais, "is the proper mark of man"—an inextinguishable self-confidence. The best French writers—whom I may not contradict—add, an excessive vanity. And to this native fund were brought from without modifying elements of discipline and control ; we shall presently see with what result.

The first centuries of Teutonic dominion have left no traces of artistic activity on French soil ; for 300 years Art slumbered amidst the din and devastation of intertribal war ; but if in these dark days the memory of Roman splendour became dim, and all tradition of methods of building was effaced, the inborn genius of the Gallic race

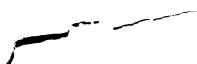
ripened during this period of incubation towards a freer, a more personal, and a more vigorous life than would have been perhaps compatible with a continuous tradition.

It was that great ruler, Charlemagne, who first called Architecture out of its sleep. Filled with his large conception of an Empire of the West, the heir to the greatness of Rome, his mind turned, as was natural, to the restoration of Gallo-Roman splendour. To this end he called around him artists and skilled workmen from the South and East. The Roman basilica was taken as the model of the new churches which, under his encouragement and with his aid, the monastic communities began to raise through the land ; and thus Roman architecture became the starting-point of the new development of the art of building. Nevertheless, other foreign influences became early active, through contact, direct or indirect, with other races. An illustration of the profound modifications which such contact could bring about may be found in a comparison, for example, between the sculptured façade of the church of St. Gilles, in Provence, a region much under Roman and Greek influences, and the church of St. Front at Perigueux. The latter church was begun, according to Viollet le Duc, towards the end of the tenth century, a few years after St. Mark's in Venice, and practically on the same plan ; the former is of much later date, yet the southern example is still strongly impregnated

with classic tradition, whilst the Aquitanian church, with its five domes, is wholly Byzantine in its general character. Here the inspiration is derived undoubtedly from the Venetians, who, at an early period, had established a trade route through France to the western seas, and had an important mart at Limoges ; and it is an interesting fact that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries it is in Aquitania alone—that is, in the province within more immediate touch of Venetian influence—that domical churches were built. Now, both these instances, illustrating as they do in a marked manner the receptivity of the Gallic intelligence, exhibit, also, conspicuously the freedom with which it fashioned foreign elements to its uses. This freedom is almost startlingly displayed at St. Gilles, where classic material is handled with an audacity which, if leading in some points to an almost barbaric incongruity, produces a result in the last degree impressive and stimulating. The work is thoroughly southern ; it has none of that logical and orderly cogency which was already at that date the mark of the work of the Gallo-Franks in the north ; but it is a work of true genius, and to me infinitely fascinating. At Perigueux, also, we find the fire of native genius fusing and fashioning material not indigenous. In ground plan, as I have said, St. Front is almost identical with St. Mark's, and in its general structural features has much analogy with the Venetian church ; nevertheless, the impression produced—

I speak, of course, of the form, for the colour is now, from floor to roof, that of stone newly and sacrilegiously flayed and scraped—is wholly different: that love for slender and soaring forms which was to mark French architecture in the future is already evident; forms which in the Venetian model are sturdy and squat, are elongated here almost to slimness; the whole proportion, and, therefore, the whole character, is changed; the Venetian idea has been, so to speak, translated into French.

The impulse towards a revival of architecture was, we saw, given by Charlemagne, but it was not till the tenth and eleventh centuries that the movement reached its full force; and its development was due mainly to the great monastic community which, founded by St. Benedict early in the sixth century, had poured from the heights of Monte Cassino its beneficent influence over Western Europe. This famous order had become a mighty power in France, controlling from the central foundation at Cluny not less, it is affirmed, than three hundred and fourteen monasteries and churches over the face of the country, and had offered in days when the land, half wilderness and half shambles, was given over to fire and sword, a sacred refuge and a stronghold to whatever of refinement, of knowledge, and of culture still struggled to live. Under the protection of the Crown, the convents long remained the sole centres of intellectual light; and if, in the second



half of the twelfth century, building passes, owing to the development of municipal institutions, mainly into the hands of lay craftsmen—though under the influence of kings and bishops—it was nevertheless in the days of paramount monastic influences that the Ogival style was initiated and evolved. Let us see by what steps.

The model first adopted in the greater part of France for the uses of the Christian church was, I said, the basilica of the Romans, with its nave and its aisles, its narthex and its apse; in this model, however, certain modifications were needed to meet the requirements of Christian worship and ritual, or for safety, and out of them grew the type of church known as Romanesque. Of these modifications one, the substitution of wagon-headed vaults for flat timber roofs, a change made necessary by the frequent occurrence of fires, led to momentous consequences, for it is, as we shall see, in the problems of vaulting that the so-called Gothic style had birth. In the vaulted buildings of the Romans stability was obtained through inert resistance; the solid weight of their vaults was taken up by solid masses of brickwork and concrete—you may, in fact, regard these edifices as virtually hewn out of a solid block. The substitution of the principle of a balance of active forces for this principle of inert resistance is probably the greatest revolution ever introduced in the science of building: you have here the

generative principle of Gothic architecture, its essence and its life.

How this revolution was brought about I can, of course, only indicate to you in summary outline. Let us first note in passing that the presence of a pointed arch, except as a structural form, does not constitute Gothic architecture. Isolated radiating pointed arches have been built in ages and countries in which the Gothic style was not dreamt of ; a building might be thoroughly Gothic in structure and principle without showing a pointed opening anywhere ; it is through the roof, not through the window, that the formative Gothic idea entered. Let us try to follow rapidly some of the main steps by which it reached its ultimate development. The earliest substitute for the discarded timber roof was the wagon vault, thrown first, tentatively, over the aisles, then over the nave ; and here an element of weakness soon made itself felt ; the walls of the nave carried on piers, and of no great thickness, were not equal to the outward thrust of the vault and gave way. Various expedients were resorted to ; buttresses were added at the points corresponding with the piers, a transverse band or rib was flung across the nave from pier to pier, the vault from being circular was, in some cases, broken and made pointed, rendering the thrust more vertical, but leaving it continuous ; the problem was yet not solved ; a counteracting force, in which we see the germ of the flying buttress, had, in certain regions,



been applied, namely, a *half*-wagon vault above the side aisles, taking up the pressure of the central vault ; but this arrangement condemned to practical darkness the upper part of the nave which, instead of windows, showed a cavernous gallery. In Aquitania, as we have already seen, a succession of cupolas on pendentives was early adopted—an arrangement which though, as in the case of the cathedral of Le Puy, it yields grand and impressive effects, is in many respects unsatisfying. An important step in the new direction was next taken at Vézelay, where intersecting vaults, but without ribs, were substituted for the continuous wagon-head ; the thrust of the vaulting being thus directed to the supporting piles. This arrangement was, however, still found unsatisfactory, and on a narthex being added, or rebuilt on a larger scale, the same disposition of vaults was retained, but they were made pointed. A few years later, in the early middle of the twelfth century, a Benedictine monk, feeble of frame, but of a lofty spirit, Suger, the great Abbot of St. Denis—who has on sculptors, by-the-bye, this special claim, that he boldly withstood the bitter denunciations launched by St. Bernard against the sculptural decoration of churches—began the erection of a church in which the tentative groupings at which I have just hinted gave place to the systematic and logical application of a new and fruitful conception ; the idea of stability based on the balance of active forces expressed in a self-

sustaining combination of upright supports and vaulting-ribs, with detached buttresses bringing their action to bear exactly on the points at which the thrust of the vaults is gathered up. So late as the days in which Viollet le Duc wrote his great dictionary of architecture, it was believed, and he endorsed the belief, that this far-reaching conception had arisen suddenly and spontaneously in the brain of one man ; more recent investigation, in which Monsieur L. Gonse, in his sumptuous work on Gothic Art, has, so far, said the last word, has brought our knowledge more into harmony with the general analogy of things. To the famous abbot belongs, it is true, as I have said, the honour of the first systematic application of the new principle, and his great work must ever remain a landmark in the history of architecture ; but it was, in fact, only the last and most complete of a series of experiments, covering a period of nearly half a century ; experiments of which the earliest is seen in the church of a Benedictine Monastery at Morienvall. This church is in the heart of the group of provinces called the *Domaine Royal*, of which Paris, the seat of Royalty, was the centre, and it is within this Frankish region that the various other tentatives to which I have alluded are to be traced ; it is in this region, also, that it reached its fullest development, and left its most perfect achievements.

External conditions were, doubtless, favourable to that growth ; the wealth and patronage of kings

and bishops were propitious to the builders of the day ; but to these incentives from above was added another which had a deep and lasting bearing upon the revolution which was taking place in architecture, namely, the development of the communes. This development, fostered not only by the kings, but by the bishops, who viewed uneasily the strength and independence of the monastic bodies, gave, by laicising it, if I may use the word, a new direction to the art of building. Cathedrals, not abbeys, were now built ; wider and loftier structures, breathing an air of larger freedom and expressing a fuller public life. From this day forward the trammels of antique tradition were wholly cast aside, and whilst French architects constructed in a style born on their own soil, they looked at home henceforth also for its decoration, in the lanes and fields of their native country.

In a tumult of creative energy Gothic architecture leapt to its height in an amazingly short space of time. Between the great reign of Philippe Auguste and that of Louis the Saint, nearly all the great cathedrals of France were begun or reached completion. But, indeed, the epoch was in many ways favourable to a great intellectual movement in France. Paris was, in the thirteenth century, a famous centre and focus of intellectual activity ; the French language was widely known in Europe ; Brunetto Latini, the master of Dante, wrote his "Trésor" in that

tongue on the ground that it was, beyond all others, "délitable et commune à toutes gens." But if these general conditions of intellectual energy favoured the growth of the new phase of art, the peculiar aptitudes of the race were singularly calculated to promote it. The rise and evolution of Ogival architecture is proper, we said, to the Domaine Royal, the north and centre of France. Well, what was the race that occupied this region? It was a race of which the basis was Kymric, formed, therefore, from the more stable and disciplinable of the two Keltic groups; but, on this root, enriched already by a Latin element, was grafted a considerable Teutonic growth which must of necessity have exercised an important modifying influence. Now, this combination would seem well suited to produce that admirably poised compound which we see in the French genius at its best—a genius which, if it is conspicuous for the restless energy, the fearlessness of intellect, and the eager grasp of new ideas which mark the native Gaul, reveals also a sense of measure, a precision, a sobriety, and a balance which point to the chastening influences of other blood.

By the side of these general characteristics we have to note certain purely artistic peculiarities. There is, for instance, a sense of the decorative in form in which the French have remained unrivalled. But I would draw your attention especially to a characteristic bent which has played no small part in the development of their architecture

—namely, a strong leaning to long ascending lines, to slimness of proportion, and to perpendicular parallelism. You may see a curious illustration of this propensity in a seemingly insignificant matter, the timbering of the rural architecture in the north and centre of France. The cottages on which you will note what I am about to point out are, of course, mostly of modern date, but they represent a tradition of which you may trace the source in the oldest parts of those towns in which timbered structures of an early period are still preserved. If you look at the timbering of a cottage or house in a purely Teutonic country, in Germany or German Switzerland, you will find that the spaces left between uprights and horizontals are approximately square, and crossed with rather frequent diagonal lines; in the French examples, on the contrary, whilst the diagonal lines are very few, the perpendicular line is absolutely dominant; one horizontal line generally sufficing for a whole wall or gable front, and the vertical timbers being brought so close that the space between them is often no wider than the timber itself. To this strong leaning I shall have occasion to draw your attention again further on. Now, it seems to me, I repeat, that the race at whose attributes and physiognomy we have just glanced was peculiarly fitted to conceive and develop the new style of building—a style in which inertness is replaced by active force, a style which, while in its absolute plasticity it offered the widest scope for innovat-

ing genius, required, nevertheless, for its fullest development the logical clearness and grasp of ideas which were conspicuous in the mental equipment of that race ; a style in which liberty and restraint, audacity and prudence, science and emotion, were so marvellously blended.

It was through the balance of these opposite qualities that Gothic building reached its highest level ; it was in the disturbance of that balance, in the encroachment of mathematics on sound artistic feeling, that the seed of its decline was sown.

From the moment that all the forces of which the poise and stability of a structure was the result were gathered up into a system of ribs, shafts, buttresses, and pinnacles, forming a complete self-sustaining skeleton carrying a roof, not of concrete, but having the play and life of masonry, it became evident that, structurally, the wall had become superfluous ; it was but a screen, and to be dealt with as such : and accordingly, the Frankish architects proceeded with constantly increasing boldness to its suppression, gradually restricting the solids almost wholly to constructive functions ; *manifest construction* became thus a leading feature of the style.

You see at a glance how, apart from the primary statical motive, the broken arch became in vaulting almost a necessity ; the sides of a square being shorter than its diagonal, it is evident that a round arch struck diagonally across it must be

higher than the arches spanning its sides, and if the field to be vaulted is a parallelogram or irregular in plan, the number of unequal levels at the key of the arches is further multiplied ; and those levels can only be brought into even approximate harmony either by stiling the smaller ones, as was done at first, or by breaking the arches ; and this latter course soon became universal. The pointed arch having thus asserted its place in the construction of a building, the desire to suppress all superfluous wall space, allied to a sense of fitness, prompted its adoption in the case of the windows, which presently reigned over the whole space between pier and pier ; and this expansion of the field of light was further demanded for the display of stained glass, to which growing importance was constantly given as an element of effect in the internal decoration of churches ; and with glorious results. No one who has not seen, as one still may see in France, a cathedral of which the glass is preserved throughout, or nearly so, can form an idea of the effulgent magnificence and poetic charm which attach to this flinging of a heaven of colour about the majesty of the House of Prayer. I may note, by the way, that in France this effect is often heightened by the glazing of the triforium, which is opened out by the substitution of a ridge-roof for a lean-to over the aisles. But whilst the germs of this architectural growth found favouring soil in the intellectual temper of the race that initiated it, the pecu-

liar æsthetic bent to which I have called your attention, the love of slim and aspiring lines, had special scope in a style in which the operative forces might be gathered up in increasingly slender channels, and in which horizontal lines had no necessary place except to satisfy the eye with a sense of binding between the parts ; and, in truth, the horizontal line rapidly dwindled, almost in some cases to effacement. So, for instance, in the Cathedral of Clermont Ferrand—I quote it because it is peculiarly happy in its elegant proportions—the only horizontal in the whole building, if we except the window-sills, is a very narrow string along the base of the triforium, and this does not go round the pier shafts, which spring, absolutely unbroken, from floor to roof. The supremacy of the vertical line is here further emphasised by carrying the shafts of the clerestory windows—as is not infrequent in France—down through the triforium, which thus becomes, in a manner, one with the upper lights. The total effect is extremely dignified, and gives that sense of satisfaction which is inseparable from the spectacle of a consistently developed dominant idea.

I spoke just now of the peculiar charm and splendour which is bestowed on the French churches by their stained glass windows. But another element of dignity was added to them by a wealth of sculpture, on which time will not allow me to dwell. It must suffice to say that, while



the carver's art in France was during the Gothic age prolific beyond example, it early reached and throughout maintained a high standard of excellence. It was everywhere full of sincerity and freshness, often of great beauty and stateliness, and always in its application marked with a strong sense of fitness and artistic propriety. Sparingly used in the interior of the churches, in which a noble restraint invites to grave and silent contemplation, it spread with unstinted, though well-marshalled, profusion over their external features. The sacred edifice thus challenged the passer-by through its manifold magnificence; and this alluring wealth was most widely spread about the portals through which the faithful were to be drawn.

But even as the stability of a Gothic church rested on a nice poise of mutually counteracting forces, so the maintenance of the style itself at its perfect point depended on a due balance of the intellectual forces which had generated it. This balance was soon to be disturbed. The fascination of the statical *tour de force*, the craving to bring down to an irreducible minimum the amount of material that would suffice to the stability of a building extravagantly lofty, was irresistible. Mathematical calculation played a daily more absorbing part, and resulted in the rearing of such a structure as the Choir of Beauvais, which, presuming too much on abstract calculation, was so lacking in solidity that it gave way within a few

years of its erection, was rendered relatively stable only by doubling the number of its supports, and is held together to this day only by a network of iron ties—a building which distresses by its stilted and meagre aspect, and lifts its vault to such a height that the eye cannot be directed to its summit without considerable physical discomfort.

Another church, no doubt in its way beautiful, which exemplifies the training down of constructive forms to the last extreme of attenuation is St. Urbain of Troyes, in which the flying buttresses have the skeleton meagreness of iron girders, and the principle of external props is carried so far that two tiny vaulted porches at the north and south entrances think it necessary to provide themselves with flying buttresses standing out at either angle on the pavement. This building has the further peculiarity that it seems by some fissiparous effort to have split its substance into two layers, as though the outer church had been shed, so to speak, leaving another inner one intact and complete.

Again, you will see that, by the elimination of all idle portions in a structure of which the active portion is a skeleton, *line* becomes dominant through the omission of *planes*; lines were soon needlessly multiplied; narrow ridges first ran up the faces of the shafts, and then, as if convexity of surface was in itself a culpable waste, what had been a shaft was hollowed into furrows divided by an arris; concavity and rigidity invaded everything

with an exasperating angularity of effect. Of this you may see an illustration in the Cathedral of Auxerre, where the choir retains the fuller forms and those of the nave shrivel into concavity.

But if the causes we have noted led, in structural forms, to a rigid multiplicity of vertical lines, exterior decoration, which rapidly grew in exuberance, gave scope to that love of sinuous serpentine forms, born of a sense of the grace of motion, which has always marked the French ; and, whilst vertical constructive lines multiplied themselves in the interior of the churches, an incontinent profusion of fantastic curves began to spread over their exterior surface, clothing them with an embroidery of wildest decorative fancies. In this development of what became in the end an uncontrolled orgy of the chisel, the first step was a breaking up of the tracery of the windows, and a substitution for geometric forms of a flame-like—"flamboyant"—arrangement of curves, both picturesque and graceful, but wanting in the dignity and fitness of the earlier device.

Meanwhile, into whatever excesses the French carvers were betrayed at this period of Gothic art, the vivacity and spontaneity of their genius ever light up their work and disarm criticism. We feel throughout that, with whatever redundancy and mannerism, they are expressing themselves sincerely and in their own vernacular. How necessary to all excellence is this cardinal virtue

of sincerity will be borne in upon you if from the façade of this Cathedral of Troyes you turn to a famous rood-loft in the Church of the Madeleine in the same city, the work of one Giovanni Gualdo, an Italian who, being buried beneath it, declares in his epitaph, not without some boldness, that he will *not* be found crushed when he is called to Judgment. This rood-loft is of extravagantly flamboyant character ; but whilst the work of the French carvers at the Cathedral is instinct with living grace and power, the genuine expression of something spontaneously conceived, the work of this Italian, which was not a natural utterance, is, like all Italian Gothic detail, intolerably clumsy and coarse ; to a degree which would be perplexing, in view of the amazing beauty and subtlety of Italian handling in Renaissance ornament, if we did not remember that the latter was with them a sincere and natural mode of expression.

Gothic Architecture, though it continued till late to produce fine work, had lost its perfect balance already before the close of the thirteenth century ; it had forfeited also some of that rich personality which marked it before it had become to some extent a matter of receipt in the hands of the Freemasons ; nevertheless, however little scope it found during the disastrous period of the English wars, it held its own with the vitality of an indigenous growth, and, as we shall see, fought long and manfully with the new ideas in the days of

the sudden swinging back to Italian influence of which I shall now have to speak. But, before leaving this branch of our subject, I will venture to note an instance, as I think it, of the fine tact of the French church-builders, namely their adoption, which I cannot regard as fortuitous, of the circular east end, the "Chevet." Mr. Fergusson, indeed, sees the source of the French ground-plan in the addition of a nave to an original circular building ; this ingenious explanation does not, I think, offer an adequate solution. It seems to me but just to give full credit to the French builders for the higher fitness of any form they adopted. How beautiful a square east end may be we, in this country, abundantly know, but it is difficult to divest oneself of the feeling that a church so terminated is a more or less arbitrarily truncated arcade which might be produced indefinitely ; in the circular arrangement, on the contrary, not only is the design more visibly closed but every limb of the encircling bays strives back, and is gathered up into a key suspended immediately above, and emphasising the holiest spot, the Altar of the Sacrifice.

And now we turn to a wholly new phase in French Art, the expression of a new order of ideas and of materially altered social conditions. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the prestige of the fighting nobility had suffered much through the introduction of artillery and the reverses of the English wars ; the middle classes

on the other hand, had under the favour of the kings steadily risen in importance. Before the end of the fifteenth century the printing-press had begun to scatter knowledge far and wide. The discovery of a new continent across the Atlantic was stirring the imagination of the Old World. But it was a discovery within that Old World which was to exercise the deepest influence on the intellectual condition of France, the discovery of Italy, through the expeditions of Charles VIII. and Louis XII.—for a discovery it may be called, though it must not be assumed that Italian influence was entirely absent in France until that period. Already in the middle of the fifteenth century René of Anjou, himself a painter and the friend of the leading Humanists of his time, had made his Court at Tarascon a centre of culture and of Art, and employed the labour of Italian artists. Within the first half of the century, too, a great painter, Jean Fouquet, had brought back from Italy a marked leaning to the new classic spirit. Nevertheless it was not until the return of the romantic stripling Charles VIII., with the flower of the French nobility, from his futile and fantastic campaign, that the desire for all things Italian took wide and lasting hold of the French—at least among the nobility—and this enthusiasm, further whetted during the chequered campaigns of his successor Louis XII., grew at a rapid pace.

It was not, however, till the second decade of

the sixteenth century, that through the example of that brilliant dilettante, Francis I., the Italian contagion showed important results. Within the thirty-five years of his reign a host of palatial buildings were raised in a new style which, if it had not, as had the style it pushed aside, the virtue of indigenous growth, was certainly marked by extreme charm and beauty. It was not, I say, of spontaneous growth, but neither was it a wholly alien product, for the people from which it was adopted had in past times left on the more vivacious Gallic stock distinct traces of its blood, and the French have not ceased to this day to claim kinship with the Imperial race. Meanwhile, borrowed though the new style was, the French at once moulded it to their own genius, and produced a result distinctly personal to themselves; and the modifications they introduced in the Italian style were just such as you would expect from the different temper of the race. The restrained and sweet gravity which delights us in the purest examples of trans-Alpine Renaissance is, it must be admitted, too often wanting in the French work of the same class; and if, as I believe, the rank of a work of art is according to the dignity of the emotion it stirs in the beholder, then the creations of the great Italians rise to a higher level than those of the artists of the French Renaissance. For vitality and variety, on the other hand, for exuberance of fancy, for resourceful ingenuity of construction, and for a delicate

sense of rhythm and proportion, the superiority of the work of the French is, in my opinion, conspicuous. Above all things it is their own; and for this reason, it seems to me that the jealous investigation which has been noticeable in recent times in France as to how far Italian artists have been unduly credited with the building of certain of the masterpieces of the Renaissance in that country, is, however valuable in the interests of truth, of no great moment to the dignity of French Art. Close study of documents has led, as is well shown, for instance, in Palustre's beautiful instalment of a history of French Renaissance, to the dismissal of claims hitherto advanced in various cases in favour of Italian Artists: it is bringing into greater prominence the names of native "maistres massons" whose claims had been underrated, men who had inherited traditions which made them greatly superior as builders, at all events, to the artists who came amongst them from beyond the Alps. But, apart from such enquiries, it is patent that all but every work of the French Early Renaissance, however it may have originated, bears the unmistakable stamp of the fusing energy of French genius. That the style was not born in France is a fact no one can challenge; that it was recast in that country into a distinctly French thing no narrowness could dispute.

The keynote of the Renaissance movement being the assertion of the beauty of life and the



dignity of man, its influence was naturally most felt in connection with secular life. The great era of church building was past, and, indeed, for a population reduced by long and wasting wars, the existing places of worship were not insufficient. The main determining motive of artistic activity under Francis I. was the ambition of the king and his nobles to multiply places of delight for their residence, especially in the country, and to replace by sights of beauty, such as they had learnt to love and covet in Italy, the moated gloom of the ancestral châteaux, built and well suited for purposes of protection and defence, but little in harmony with the tastes of the pleasure-loving Court and the light-hearted young king who led it. Prodigious and breathless was the activity with which châteaux were raised, first in the Royal province watered by the Loire, and then in and about Paris. It would be fruitless to enumerate at length even the chief of the stately buildings which, from that time to the death of Henri IV., occupied the energies of French architects; nor can I do more here than name a few of the foremost of these architects, such as, in the first line, Jean Bullant and Philibert de l'Orme, and in the second, Colin Biart, Pierre Chambiges, Pierre Nepveu, alias Trinqureau, Gadier, Le Prestre, and Hector Sohier. It will be more profitable to note a few points in connection with the evolution of the style itself.

Although the great outburst of activity in the

new direction coincides with the reign of Francis, Italian influence had already, as I have said, begun to assert itself in architecture, as in other things, in the preceding century ; through Charles VIII. at Amboise, for instance, and more effectually under his successor, who built the east wing at the Château de Blois, and whose great minister, Cardinal d'Amboise, raised near Rouen the magnificent Château of Gaillon, known to us now through a few fragments only, and the precious work of du Cerceau. In these buildings, however, the French and the Latin elements are jumbled into a pasticcio rather than blended to a whole. As an interesting example of this confusion I will instance the portal of the Ducal Palace at Nancy, in which the decorative magnificence of the whole design palliates the maddest marriage of heterogeneous forms ever conceived in an artist's brain. It is interesting to observe the attitude of a people possessing great building traditions and very definite æsthetic propensities, in the face of an innovation imposed on it, in a manner, from without, but stimulating to its sense of beauty, and its appetite for the new. Two influences were averse to the new fashion ; first, the spirit of the men of the burgher class, who clung sturdily to a style identified in their minds with their nationality and the growth of their liberties ; and secondly, the conservative attitude of the Church, jealous of an art so secular in its inspiration, tenacious, too, of a tradition of building closely

bound up with its history, and exactly moulded on its needs. We see, accordingly, on the one hand, the municipalities continuing for some time to build their public halls on the old lines, and, on the other, the clergy erecting Gothic churches well into the sixteenth century, and retaining the structural dispositions of Ogival architecture even after the outer forms of the Renaissance had been accepted for sacred buildings. It is indeed not a little curious to see so logical a people, while holding firmly to their old methods of construction, consenting to abandon forms which had grown out of those methods, and were in fact the emphasised expression of that construction. We see with amazement edifices constructed on the basis of a predominance of the vertical line, piled up painfully with tier upon tier of parts taken from a style based on the opposite principle. No talent can redeem so deliberate a violation of every fitness.

As might be expected, in the first efforts of Renaissance building in France, the classic orders were used in no very scholarly fashion ; they were, however, it must be owned, handled and applied with a delightful sense of the picturesque, and if severity and simplicity are often wanting, an altogether surprising alertness of idea and fertility of resource are manifest on every hand. In the case of secular buildings the transition from the later Gothic was facilitated by the fact that square-headed openings prevailed already in that style, of

which, too, the incontinence in ornament was acceptable to the exuberant spirit of the new Art. The character of that ornament, however, was entirely changed ; fantastic, foreign arabesque took the place of the floral decoration which had been one of the glories of the French school.

Meanwhile the love for aspiring forms lived on, and the tendency to complexity died hard. The wealth of sky-line produced by spires and pinnacles was perpetuated in high-pitched roofs, turrets, and tall, buttressed dormer-windows. The sky-line of Chambord could have been conceived only by an architect having Gothic tradition in his blood. In other matters, too, we find the Gothic habit surviving. The external winding-staircase, for instance, was long preserved, and you may see on a dainty façade of the time of Francis I. the survival of the grouped shaft in a fanciful colonnette engaged on the face of a pilaster. But most interesting to observe is the tenacious struggle of the vertical line throughout French Renaissance architecture. "The orders" with their bold entablatures did, it is true, compel some stress on horizontal lines ; though we shall see, later, how this restraint was in part evaded ; but their effect was at once balanced by an emphasised vertical grouping and uniting of the openings in the different stories, and by projecting wings, towers, and pavilions, which marked with perpendicular lines of shadow the elevation of the French buildings.

Of the first period of the style, the finest example is undoubtedly the south-west angle of the Court of the Louvre, by Pierre Lescot, a great artist, though he may not wholly justify Ronsard's hyperbolic eulogy, a building made doubly stately by the fact that the reliefs, which so richly clothe it, are due to the hand of Jean Goujon, who, with Germain Pilon, marks the highest level of French plastic art in the sixteenth century. These reliefs display, like those from the same hand on the Fontaine des Innocents, in a marked degree, that conspicuously French quality, the sense of the decorative properties of line and form.

By this time the knowledge of classic art was becoming more thorough, and the application of its features more correct, and with a more Romanising spirit, if I may so call it, a tendency to larger forms grew up; so, at Écouen first, and later at Chantilly, we find Jean Bullant introducing what was called the "ordre colossal," an order, that is, embracing the whole height of a façade. A greater aspect of strength and stateliness no doubt attached to this new disposition, and the dying out of Gothic traditions of common-sense blinded him to its inherent incongruity. But even in adopting this purely Roman device his Gallic blood prompts him irresistibly to a flouting of the horizontal line. He does so with curious thoroughness in the pavilion which bears his name at Chantilly. Not only does he here omit any line hinting even at a division into floors, but of the

windows in the upper and lower stories, which are compacted into groups of vertical designs, the lower plunge downwards through the base which carries the order, and the upper breaking audaciously through the broad entablature of that order, lifts itself bodily and to nearly half its height into the roof. A most corrupting spectacle, my young friends, I fear, for justice bids me add that the effect is very pleasing. Thus genius, but genius only, redeems what in mediocrity would seem a sin. But Bullant was yet to be outdone, for in the design of the inner court of Charleval, a work begun under Charles IX., but never carried out, and known to us only through du Cerceau, who speaks of it with extravagant praise (Lübke suggests that he may have designed it himself), we see not only the same omission of floor-line, but, actually, niches with statues so introduced that they cut across the exact spot where the floor lies, so that an effort of reflection is required to assure us that a floor *can* exist there. Philibert de l'Orme, the learned and courtly engineer, architect, and writer, was, as far as we can judge from the fragments of his work which survive, and the knowledge we have from du Cerceau of his designs for Anet and the Tuileries, an artist of well-balanced mind and scholarly training, whose conceptions are marked by dignity and refinement, but in whom the stamp of genius is not so evident as in the less cultured Bullant. Anet with its wide courts, its palatial distribution, and its rather frigid

triumphal archway, must have been impressive and stately ; of the design for the Tuileries, on the other hand, I am unable to form a favourable opinion. On either side of a pavilion, not itself I think very happy in design, abuts without evident connection a low building in which a crowded attic of unfortunate proportions rests immediately, nothing intervening, upon an arcade, very handsome and dignified in itself, but calculated to carry a palace, and not a highly-decorated garret. It is as if you should place a hat on a pair of legs and offer the result as a man.

To de l'Orme is due the introduction of what is called the "ordre Français"—a column of which the fluted drums are divided by ornamental bands. But the days were near when the light of creative genius in Art was to burn low. The days of civil strife and butchery, in which so many noble lives were quenched in blood, the dark days of the Huguenot persecution, were not auspicious for the growth of Art, and with the close of the century we find life and spontaneity at a low ebb—little production, a tendency now to heavy monotony and now to baroque redundancy, and a lack of sense of fitness which admitted of masking with a ponderous classic façade churches built on the scheme, if not with the forms, of Ogival architecture. Officialism, too, in artistic matters was at hand, and soon that implacable organiser Colbert, was to regulate the arts, also, by royal decree, and to found an Academy which admitted only one

saving creed ; the frigid pomp, the artificial graces of the structures inspired by the " Roi Soleil "—majestic in the many-storied wig which encircled his retreating brow—how far are they from the radiant daintiness, the joyous freedom of the palaces and plaisesances which sprang up in the days and at the beck of that truly sunny sovereign Francis the First!

To that period let us for one brief moment revert, to notice, however summarily, the parallel development of painting and sculpture. In the latter Art we have already recorded the names of Jean Goujon and Germain Pilon. These great artists were not without forerunners, of whom, no doubt, Michel Columbe was the most gifted, though his works lack both suppleness and definiteness of artistic purpose. I should name also Nicholas Bachelier, and the Giusti, a family of Italians settled in Tours, but true to their nationality in the character of their work. These latter artists, even more than Michel Columbe, seem to me overrated, and whilst not denying their ability, I cannot subscribe to the prevalent estimate of their chief work, the clumsy statuary which huddles round the tomb of Louis XII., at St. Denis. In Germain Pilon we already see, in a more marked degree than in Goujon, the pernicious influence of Primaticcio and the school of Fontainebleau. Graceful his work is, and accomplished, but it does not often attain to a very high standard. From this judgment, however, I must



except his portraiture ; here the mannerism of his ideal work is controlled by the sincerity of his love of nature and his perception of character : he is working here rather from his heart than from his brain. His bronze effigy of the Chancelier de Birague in the Louvre is a work of surprising merit. And, indeed, it is instructive to observe how, in the exercise of their great gift of portraiture, stimulating contact with Nature, and, through that contact, the temporary suppression of self-consciousness and conventional pre-occupations, have enabled French sculptors throughout the most corrupt period of Art to produce works of startling merit and subtlety—I will only instance the masterpieces of Coysevox, and amongst them the breathing bronze of the Grand Condé.

Turning now briefly to painting, we find in the sixteenth century but little to rejoice us—yet a few considerable names redeem it from barrenness. When Francis I. began to build he did not find amongst his countrymen painters to whom he could entrust the decoration of his numerous palaces. The elder Clouet was, it is true, already prominently known, but both he and his more famous successor in the nickname of “ Janet ” were specially and exclusively painters of portraits. There were, of course, at the time a number of painters in the country ; but whilst it may be admitted that Francis in his keen admiration for everything Italian may in some measure have overlooked native talent, it is difficult to believe

that any very marked personality could have failed to assert itself in spite of the crushing incubus of the Italian influence—a baneful influence be it said in passing, for it was not the influence of Raphael or of Lionardo, of Andrea del Sarto or of Titian, with all of whom the King was in more or less direct contact, but the influence of Cellini, mischievous for all his genius, and especially, through their long sojourn in the country, that of Primaticcio, il Rosso, and Nicolo dell' Abate, which weighed on the Art of France. Nor does the sixteenth century in France boast in painting, apart from the Clouets, any name of much calibre, except perhaps that of Perréal, and certainly that of Jean Cousin, a man whose dignity of artistic temper preserved him in great measure from the excesses of the school of Parmigiano. His most notable triumphs are, however, achieved in painted glass; as a painter of easel pictures his most ambitious work is "The Last Judgment," now in the Louvre, which, though scholarly and dignified, is a rather dreary effort. His "Eva Prima Pandora" at Sens places him in a far more favourable light.

By the side of oil-painting and illumination the art of enamelling flourished greatly in France. In this category the great School of Limoges is known to you, the names of Pénicaud, Léonard Limousin, Reymond, and Pierre Courtois are familiar to all. In the art of glass painting you have first the great anonymous "verriers" of the

Gothic period, and then during the Renaissance such men as Cousin, whom I have named, Pinagrier, Le Pot, and Engrand le Prince, of whom the first-named is the greatest.

And here a reflection suggests itself on the nature of the French gift of colour as manifested during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Speaking broadly, it seems to me to be based less on a sense of harmony and subtle combination than on a keen sensitiveness to luminous splendour and intensity of hue ; and it is, further, curious to note that in much of the earlier glass the sumptuous results obtained are largely due to scientific combinations—of which, indeed, the outcome is not always equally happy. The effect almost exclusively aimed at at first was a purple effulgence of hue ; and this was produced by a scientific juxtaposition of very small fragments of red and blue glass, corrected by a sparing interspersion of other colours, and controlled, of course, by the close network of the lead-lines. Now these reds and blues, which produce together the dominant tone, are not seldom in themselves crude and harsh in the extreme, though generally yielding in combination a most gorgeous hue ; and it is suggestive that when, departing from this scientific scheme of balanced gem-like spots of colour—a scheme which involved, of course, designs very small in scale—the glass-painters from time to time introduced larger figures : they seem to have cut themselves adrift from a sure anchorage.

Their instinct of harmony was not an infallible guide ; certain it is that the colour is in these cases not seldom disastrously discordant. This uncertainty of instinct is seen even more clearly in the later works, in which a larger scale was uniformly adopted ; and by the side of a window by Jean Cousin, limpid with hues of amethyst, sapphire and topaz, and fair as a May morning, or a window of the thirteenth century, deep and fervid as a midsummer night, your eye may fall too often on another, or a whole row of others, of almost ferocious garishness and crudity. The colour-sense was, I repeat, not unerring. The enamels of Limoges, of which some are so admirable and some so harsh, suggest similar reflections.

And here I must take leave of this great and teeming century, naming only, lest I seem to forget them, the Huguenot martyr, Bernard de Palissy, the famous potter, and Hélène de Hangest, to whom is now ascribed the exquisite ware of Oiron, known as "faïence Henri II."

How architecture fared in the following century, the "Grand Siècle," I have already suggested. The same taint of inflated monotony which prevailed in the works of the builders, spread also to painting. Dull, already, in the hands Simon Vouet and Sebastien Bourdon, it reaches the height of turgid pomposity with Charles le Brun, a mighty personage in his day, who controlled autocratically nearly all the artistic production of

the France of Louis XIV., and whose magnificent energies, it must be owned, seem in these punier days to border on the fabulous. Let us not forget, however, that the gentle Lesueur worked also in those days, and that during the epoch of which the towering wig seems the symbol and the epitome, an artist like Nicholas Poussin found in the large, sad silences of the Roman Campagna, the inspiration of his grave and noble works, and that, far from Paris, Claude Lorrain enshrined on canvases that will not die, the poem of the setting sun. In the sculpture of the great reign the mannerism caught from Bernini prevailed, but it cannot hide from us, though it sorely mars the fiery genius of the Provençal, Pierre Puget.

Time suffers me to do no more than glance at the revulsion which followed the death of Louis XIV. The reign of his successor is not one of great architectural activity ; it is best mirrored in the minor arts that minister to the comforts of life. The doctrine of discipline and restraint yields now to a new gospel—the gospel of indulgence and ease. A sprightly daintiness presides over all artistic production. The difference between the two reigns is the difference between Madame de Maintenon and Madame du Barry ; and the utter relaxation of all restraint in life is curiously featured in the forms imparted throughout to every inanimate thing which is capable of receiving shape. The sinuous curves which already in the days of the flamboyant style had pushed aside the

severer and more noble lines of the perfect Gothic, and had, in their turn, been held in check by the Latin spirit in the earlier days of the Renaissance, broke bonds when the grave closed over the solemn monarch, and, first in France, and then throughout the width of a mimicking Europe, ran riot in the domain of the applied arts. A senseless writhing of unmeaning curves held carnival from that date over every object of use or ornament, and so identified have these forms become with a certain elegance of social *ton* that the most favoured classes, all the world over, see in them, to this day, the last word of elegance and taste. You could have no better example of the lack of all sense of the congruous in decoration than this adoption by society in our time of a style which is the exact mirror of a time so widely different. Yet even in those days of vapid mannerism there were men who escaped the general taint. In architecture a noble severity commends the works of Soufflot and Servandoni, and, in painting, Chardin employed his delicate gift in the rendering of simple scenes of homely life. But the truest interpreter of whatever was gracious and dainty in this artificial epoch was that greater painter, though not truer artist, J. B. Watteau, whose name is the last I shall bring before you to-night. We find in his work, indeed, no high ideal, no strong imaginative fire—how should we find them, seeing what he portrayed?—but in the vivacity and grace of his drawing, in

the fascination of his harmonies, rich and suave at once, in the fidelity with which he reflected his times without hinting at their coarseness, this wizard of the brush remains one of the most interesting as he is one of the most fascinating masters of his country's art.

Is there any lesson that we may draw from this hurried survey of artistic evolution among the French? I have dwelt with emphasis on the genius of their mediæval builders; do I advocate—the young architects for whom I have spoken mainly to-night, may ask—do I advocate the adoption of Gothic forms for the purposes of our own lives? I have spoken to little effect if my answer can be doubtful. Artistic forms are the vesture of ideas and the expression of mental conditions; the ideas and mental conditions of our day are widely removed from those of the Middle Ages: the modern mind cannot with fitness put on the garb which was moulded on the mind of a day long past. But if we may not fitly adopt those forms, we cannot too reverently note the spirit which presided over their development, for a like spirit brought to bear on other material and under other conditions may yet bear new and noble fruit. And the characteristics of that spirit are—a masculine independence, a tenacious grasp of central principles, a fearless sincerity in expression, a scorn of shams, and trust in Truth.

**ADDRESS**

**DECEMBER 9TH, 1893**





STUDENTS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

On the last three occasions on which I have asked you to follow me in a brief inquiry into the relation of artistic production to the conditions under which it is evolved, I dealt, successively, with the three principal races commonly described as Latin, namely, the Italian, the Spanish, and the French races. To-night, I propose to ask you to pass with me from the Latin world into a world offering to it the abruptest contrast, ethical and intellectual, I mean the Teutonic world ; and on this occasion I shall consider especially the portion of it now known as Germany—not the narrower Germania of Tacitus, hemmed in on the west by the Rhine, by the Danube on the south, and divided, as he quaintly tells us, on the east from the land of the Sarmatians by the valid bulwark of mutual fear—nor on the other hand the vast Germanic Empire ruled over by Charlemagne, but the Germany of modern maps, together with the German portions of the Austrian Empire. Nevertheless, in forming an estimate of the German genius, we may not shut out from view its early influence beyond these limits ; neither that of the Ostrogoths, and, after them,

of the Longobards in Italy, nor that of the Franks in Gaul, to which country they bequeathed a name, and where, leavening a more numerous indigenous Keltic stock, they produced that happy racial compound to which we owe, amongst other things, the highest flight of Christian architecture.

In considering the subject we have before us to-day, we shall find ourselves confronted with a strangely perplexing phenomenon; for we are brought face to face with a people possessed during many centuries with a strong craving for artistic expression, and reaching on occasions to achievement of a very high order, and yet, as a whole, much wanting, it seems to me, in qualities which we connect with the artistic temper, and which are no doubt indispensable for the attainment of supreme excellence—a people which, through the exceptional fruitfulness of its æsthetic impulses, or, more accurately, perhaps, of its desire for expression through form and colour, and in virtue of the power, the thoroughness, and the masculine sincerity which stamp its handiwork, establishes a just claim to a prominent place in the wide Republic of the Arts, and has nevertheless put upon the world, by the side of many and noble masterpieces, a quite curious amount of ungainly and at times all but repellent work. Certain qualities, I said, seem to be wanting in the æsthetic constitution of the race, and these are, as I think, the instinct—I mean, of course, in the Graphic Arts—of congruity and fitness, the sense of rhythm,

and a perception of the value of restraint and of repose, attributes in the absence of which the highest sense of beauty would be sought in vain. It is impossible indeed to survey, however cursorily, the immense field of German activity in Art without being powerfully impressed by the high qualities revealed in every part of it ; nevertheless the final impression left by such a survey is of a people amongst which the ethic sense is constantly predominant over the æsthetic impulse ; and we are made conscious that if we have been frequently moved to respectful appreciation and admiring wonder, it is but seldom that we have been conscious of that sweet, that enveloping, that sufficing sense which has its springs only in the æsthetically beautiful. Surely the noblest and the fullest expression of the deep elements of poetry which lie at the roots of the German nature has not been conveyed to the world through the means of form and colour : it is not on waves of light but on waves of sound that it has been given to Germans to carry us into the purest region of æsthetic joy.

It will be my endeavour, in the rapid sketch to which the limits of our time restrict me, to make good this criticism, and whilst doing full justice to the admirable achievements of German Art, to show you by examples how it has been, in my view, affected by the flaws to which I have pointed.

In the vivid picture of the Germans spread

before us by Tacitus, one peculiarity of temperament is noted which had a powerful influence on their eventual development in Art, to wit, their intense feeling of personal independence; a feeling of which he gives an amusing illustration: "Their warriors," he says, "when summoned to meet for deliberation in public assembly, will loiter by the way even to the second and third day, lest it should seem that they had met under compulsion." Now, strong as were from the earliest times the external influences to which German Art was beholden, its national characteristics were never forfeited, and a sturdy independence and local flavour marked it throughout. In the aspect of the country itself, also, the description given by the same historian points to a feature which had no small influence over the future of the Art of Germany, namely the presence of vast tracts of forest; wood early became and ever remained a favoured material with the Germans; carpentry and carving were at all times a passion with them, and in the latter they achieved prodigies of ingenuity and skill. Meanwhile, whatever other modifications may have been effected by the great shifting of the Germanic tribes when, under the pressure of the encroaching Huns, in the beginning of the fifth century of our era, they flooded the western and southern lands of Europe, the Germans are, when we first meet them in the Carolingian era, and even earlier, in one respect radically different from the men whom Tacitus

presents to us, as singularly indifferent to adornment and without care for the precious metals. At this time a very different spectacle is offered to us : a love of splendour and of personal adornment—a love fed by the spoils of Italy, and fired by the sight of Italian pomp—had, on the contrary, become general amongst German warriors and chiefs, as is attested by the extraordinary abundance of ornaments, and especially of brooches of rich design and precious material, which has been yielded up by their tombs throughout the country. This love of magnificence and of adornment of the person has, it may be observed, never wholly left the Germans ; it gave in the Middle Ages a most precious impulse to what they call the lesser Arts, *die Kleinkünste*, and may still be noted in the taste for pageantry and processions which survives amongst them and their Teutonic kinsmen in Flanders to our day.

The first great impulse to Art in Germany proper was given by Charlemagne, a prince, as you know, of vast and noble ambition, whose dream, in a large measure fulfilled in his own time, was of a great, broadly-based Christian empire of the west, which should rival pagan Rome herself in splendour, and who sought to establish the greatness of that empire, not on military supremacy alone but on intellectual culture and artistic development. I say in Germany proper, because on Italian soil Theodoric the Ostrogoth had already, early in the sixth century, adorned the capital of

his dominions, Ravenna, in emulation of Imperial Rome, and under strong Roman influence, with buildings—churches, palaces, and a mausoleum, in which was sown the seed of the future and finest development of German architecture; and this building activity which marked the Ostrogoths was maintained under their successors, the Longobards, who were famous as architects through the Middle Ages, and who, from the ruder efforts of the Duomo Vecchio of Brescia, were to rise to such achievements as Sant' Ambrogio at Milan and San Zeno at Verona. If of the palaces of Charlemagne but vague traces have been preserved we are fortunate in possessing, in almost its original form, though modified in aspect and not improved by a choir added to it in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a stately tomb-church which he raised for himself at Aachen in the last years of the eighth century, and for which he drew his inspiration, through Ravenna, from ancient Rome; and this building became in its turn the great prototype of the circular churches subsequently erected in Germany.

Just as this circular plan, which came to be used not for churches only, but also for baptisteries, was drawn from the South, so also the other, and predominant, model for Christian churches, the basilica form, came, as did every gift of civilisation, from beyond the Alps.

It has been necessary to allude here to the artistic initiative of Charlemagne, not only because

he was a purely German prince, but because the centre of his empire and his chief residence were in German Aachen ; but you are to remember that Germany proper, *i.e.* the kingdom of East Franconia and Saxony, only comes into existence at the treaty of Verdun, by which the Empire of Charlemagne was divided amongst his sons. We have not to trace the history of the new German State, but it is necessary here to note that whilst the division between the Eastern and Western Frankish Kingdoms was henceforth maintained, the Southern portion of the Carlovingian dominion which carried the imperial title became eventually merged into the German States, and under Otho the First we find the " Holy Roman Empire " coming into existence to the infinite bane of Germany. With it grew dreams of a vast Imperial dominion of which the centre of gravity should be in Rome, like that of the empire whose purple it had assumed, dreams that led to that deadly struggle between Emperors and Popes in which the great House of Hohenstaufen finally fell, dragging down with it in its fall the supremacy of Germany in the western world. Meanwhile the days of the Hohenstaufen had been for Germany days of great splendour and fame, days filled with the fervour of the Crusades and gracious with high and chivalrous ideals. In those days German poetry, fired by contact with France, reached the highest level it was to attain previous to its re-awakening at the end of the last century. Then



it was—a hundred years before Dante—that the knightly mystic, Wolfram von Eschenbach, sang of Parsival and the Quest and Winning of the Holy Grail ; then it was also that another tuneful knight, Walter von der Vogelweide, struck his harp, singing blithely of the love of women—boldly, too, of wrong at Rome ; at this time, also, were brought together, in one great National Epic, the ancient legends of the deeds and death of Siegfried, of Brunhilda's wrath and of Criemhild's revenge ; and during this favouring age it was that in Architecture a vigorous national style reached maturity, and prevailed until, with the advent of French supremacy, French influence profoundly affected throughout Europe the spirit of the builder's Art.

It was in the region watered by the Rhine that Art in Germany reached its earliest maturity, a region in which, apart from the close neighbourhood of a richly gifted Keltic race, everything conspired to favour its growth ; but especially the wealth and power of the cities that rose along the river's bank—seats of mighty bishoprics, vieing one with the other in pomp and splendour, such as Mayence, Cologne, and Spires. Accordingly the churches of the Rhineland form, as a whole, the most imposing group in the Romanesque Architecture of Germany. But if we see in such churches, for instance, as the Doms of Spires, Worms, and Mayence, the Apostel-Kirche and St. Martin the Great in Cologne, the completest

specimens of the style in its earlier and transitional phases, as well as the most interesting illustration of the freedom of treatment which it admitted, the harvest of Architecture was rich also in other provinces of the kingdom, in Swabia, in Franconia, in Westphalia, in Nether Saxony ; it will suffice to name such noble buildings as the Scotch Church of St. James at Ratisbon, the Doms of Bamberg, Brunswick, and Osnabruck, and the Godehardi and Michael's churches at Hildesheim ; noting, by the way, that the sculpture of caps, friezes, and mouldings in Franconia and North Germany is, as far as I have seen it, superior to that produced in the Rhenish Provinces. This German-Romanesque style—for I must adhere, with the Germans themselves, to this appellation, for which Fergusson prefers to substitute " Early Gothic," because the word Gothic seems to me to attach emphatically to certain principles rather than to certain forms, and to be therefore unsuited to a style in which those principles are not embodied—this German-Romanesque then, I say, has distinctive characteristics of which some contain elements of great beauty ; such, for example, as the great octagonal dome-like towers that crown the crossings of their cathedrals—a noble feature which might have reached yet more striking developments had not the style succumbed to the invading French influence in the thirteenth century. These octagonal domes, rising broadly above the intersection of nave and transept, and

grouped with flanking towers to which an elegant external gallery frequently unites them, majestically gather up the whole design in a culminating feature adding emphasis where taste and construction alike suggest it. Another characteristic feature, on the other hand, appears to me to involve a violation of every fitness, and to illustrate, therefore, the indictment on which I ventured just now: I mean the almost invariable presence in the churches of this period of a western as well as an eastern apse. This arrangement, whatever its first determining cause, whether, as has been variously said, the desire to do equal honour to the relics of two saints of like dignity, or the necessity of absorbing into an enlarged structure a mausoleum or a baptistery previously independent of it, is of considerable antiquity, and is already fully adopted in the interesting ground-plan of a Benedictine convent in the ninth century now existing in the library of the old Irish foundation of St. Gallen in Switzerland. Its permanent retention, however, must be laid to the account of the German builders. Externally, the effect of this disposition is monotonous and perplexing, but it is in the interior that it chiefly jars on our sense of artistic propriety, and the jar is made more sensible by the fact that the choirs being built over crypts are, by an arrangement in itself very dignified and impressive, raised to a considerable height above the floor of the nave, from which they are approached either on the sides, or in the

centre, by broad flights of steps. The entrance to these churches is in the majority of cases at the side, and the eye of the spectator, controlled as he enters by no dominant object, is solicited simultaneously and distressingly in two diametrically opposite directions—each individual group of apse and dome suffers by rivalry with the other, and, to crown the special unfitness of the arrangement in a sacred building, neither apse can be faced at such a distance as permits of grasping its design as a whole, in its connection with the nave, without turning the back full and immediately on that before which no Catholic passes without reverent genuflexion. I am bold to say that such a disposition could not have found general acceptance among a people in which a sense of æsthetic fitness was congenital and strong. Another sin against propriety in design is exemplified in the otherwise beautiful Apostel-Kirche in Cologne, namely the placing of a transept at the western extremity of a church, which, for an exception, is entered from that quarter. You feel at once that the scattering of the attention to the right and to the left at a point from which it should, on the contrary, be gathered up and directed to the eastern apse involves a palpable flaw in the composition.

I would fain after these strictures dwell on some of the many beauties of these churches; but the limits of your time forbid my doing so, and I must now pass on to the second stage of German

Architecture, to which Art I will for convenience and continuity momentarily confine my attention. With the downfall of the Hohenstaufen dynasty and the advent of French ascendancy, a great and far-reaching change came over the builder's Art in Germany ; not, indeed, by evolution and organic growth, as in the Isle de France, but solely by contagion ; an importation from without, not a development from within, and, therefore, without normal inner life ; Gothicism supplanted that national form of Art in which Germany had till then expressed her powerful idiosyncrasy. I know no more striking instance of the growth of sound criticism in Art within the last generation or two—or, perhaps, it would be more accurate to say, of its shallowness in certain matters till very recent times—times within my own vivid recollection—than that it was up to that date an article of faith through the length and breadth of Germany—and this in spite of history and internal evidence—that the Gothic style was *par excellence* the national, home-born style of Germany, and a deluded patriotism has had, no doubt, much to do with the retention in Germany of “black letter,” the Gothic character, though its crabbed angularities and the licence of its flourishes found, it is true, especially favouring soil in the peculiarities of the æsthetic temper of the people. Nay, if we go back to the end of the last century, we find Goethe himself almost angrily asserting not only that this style in architecture was indigenous in Germany, but that

no other nation had an indigenous style at all, "for," he says, "the Italians have none, and still less the Frenchmen"—the Frenchmen, its only true begetters! Now the slightest study of the style in Germany shows us—and I say this in full consciousness of the prodigious achievement embodied in the Cathedral of Cologne, and with ungrudging recognition of the many and great beauties of certain other isolated examples—that the Germans, as a race, were, speaking broadly, never at one in spirit with Ogival architecture. The result was such as you would expect; in the use of a form of architecture which was not of spontaneous growth in their midst, and unrestrained, moreover, as they were by a sound, innate instinct of æsthetic fitness, German builders were often led into solecisms, incongruities and excesses, from which in the practice of their native style they have been largely free. As an instance of this lack of a perception of fitness and organic harmony, I would point to their frequent favouring of a square box-like shape in the shell of churches of which the detail is Gothic, a shape produced by making nave and aisles of equal height, thus restoring the predominance of the horizontal line, while professedly using a style of which the fundamental lineal character is vertical and upward-striving. Again, of the lack of delight in rhythmic variety which I have imputed to them, no more marked instance can be given than the not infrequent equalisation of the width, also, of the

aisles and the nave ; or, what is even worse, an approximate equalisation, so that to the discomfort arising out of the crushed aspect of the nave between the encroaching aisles, a perplexity is added as to the exact relative width of the central and lateral areas. An intolerable example of this vagary, and not this vagary only, is furnished in the Sebaldus-Kirche in Nuremburg. Again, the surprising clumsiness with which the style was sometimes used is seen in the rude fashion in which occasionally enlarged east ends are clapped on—I can find no other word—to an earlier and narrower nave. I will take for an illustration the Cathedral of Augsburg, and observe that this church was erected and tolerated in a great and famous centre of artistic activity, whence, later on, many fine works of every kind went forth to the honour of the Swabian school. In this church—I shudder as I remember its exterior—a choir at least half as high again as the nave and of the usual cubic shape is stuck on to, or against, that nave, *ex abrupto*, without a trace of an attempt at articulation and transition, and with an effect I leave you to imagine : but what you hardly *can* imagine is the aspect presented here by a circular east end and ambulatory crushed round a square choir. In this wonderful structure the workmanship vies with the design ; one shaft at the north-east end of the choir—and, by the way, all the shafts rise *without bases* from the floor—stands truncated and vacant at the top, because,

apparently, it did not work out so as to meet the adjacent vaulting-rib which it was destined to carry. Such solecisms, I repeat, do not occur when the Germans build, if you will allow me the expression, in their own language. And this foreign invasion had further curious effects. We saw on a previous occasion how, in the Ogival style in France, line became, by a natural process, predominant over plane. Now the love of lines (and especially, as we shall see later on, of curved and curling lines) was strong amongst the Germans, and, with it, a delight in intricacy and involution, and a curious fondness for seeing through and behind things to other and yet other things beyond—a trait, perhaps, not confined to the æsthetic side of the organisation—and these tendencies, uncurbed and fed by an ingenuity that exulted in manual *tours de force*, found peculiar scope in Gothic Architecture. Let us look at one or two instances. We noted in France a tendency here and there in certain over-ripe specimens of the style to treat the external decoration of a wall, in part, as an independent open screen, and this tendency found, as you will expect from what I have said just now, congenial soil in the German temper; sometimes, in gifted hands, with results, let it be owned, that seduce us while we criticise them. As an example take that portion of the west end of Strasburg Cathedral that is due to Erwin von Steinbach, and which shows over a façade, complete already in itself, an independent



and lace-like screen of arcades and colonnettes of unbelievable attenuation, of a slimness, indeed which suggests iron rather than stone, and illustrates that want of consent between material and design which is not infrequent in German-Gothic—not least markedly, I think, in their famous open-work spires. You will not be surprised to hear that this dainty veil of stone, which covers the whole height of Erwin's façade, has to be held together from top to bottom by a net of innumerable iron ties. Of this passion for veiling ornament with ornament in accumulated intricacy abundant instances are to be found in Germany, and it reached, perhaps, its extreme expression in those late Gothic pulpits, in the erratic tracery of which the eye is carried on through layer beyond layer of fantastic scroll-work, only not worthy of a Chinese carver inasmuch as it lacks the elegance and restraint of the Mongolian work. But in nothing are we made more conscious of the fact that in Gothic work, the German—I speak, of course, of the average German architect—was handling an Art with which he had, so to speak, no inward spiritual connection, than in his treatment of tracery, of pinnacles, and of vaulting-ribs, wherein a clumsy dulness alternates with unbridled caprice; and this unrestrained extravagance is, perhaps, most curiously displayed in internal work, and in the treatment of pinnacles, which German carvers habitually twist and twirl according to their wayward fancy, and in utter oblivion of the

original function, constructive and decorative, of this particular feature. An acute example of this disordered propensity is offered in a carved reredos at Rothenburg, due to the hand of Tilman Riemenschneider—a carver, by the way, of superlative skill, and conscious of it: here the pinnacles, not content with swaying and curling in a strange delirium, intertwine and embrace, and shoot out to exorbitant and sinuous lengths, snake-like and armed with forked tongues, then finally pass frankly over into the form of briars, adorned here and there with a few shrivelled curling leaves. But not less remarkable developments may occasionally be observed in the use of the vaulting-ribs, a feature of which the primary constructive significance might have been expected to shield it from a too lawless treatment. An instance, extreme I admit, is to be seen in the Church of St. Leonard in Frankfurt; here, in a small side-chapel, you will be startled to find a knot of vaulting-ribs tangled in a wild debauch, at a distance of a yard, more or less, from the vault itself, with which, indeed, they disclaim all connection, plunging right and left, at different levels, now into a bare wall, and now into a window panel, according to their own wild will. I have often wondered at the strange contrast between the reticent and grave sobriety of the Architecture of Germany before the fall of the Hohenstaufens, and its erratic self-indulgence in the Gothic period. One cause amongst others

was, no doubt, the passing of Architecture more and more out of the hands of ecclesiastics into those of masons who were laymen. Amongst people possessed as the French were throughout with a delicate and restraining artistic instinct, a similar transition wrought for good rather than for harm : in Germany, with the less subtle and less safe æsthetic instincts of its people, the undeniable gain in variety and individuality was outweighed by the growth of mere handicraftsman's dexterity, and by the prevalence of the uncouth spirit of the bourgeois with his absorbing delight in a puzzle.

Let me not, however, convey to your minds the impression that, apart from three or four famous examples, the Gothic churches of Germany are devoid of charm. This would be, indeed, to mislead you ; nevertheless where charm is found it arises mainly, not in architectural purity and finish, but in qualities of colour, of variety and of suggestion—qualities which we painters should surely be the last to underrate. I will quote as an example the church of St. Lorenz in Nuremberg. Nothing could well be more delightful than the impression which you receive on entering it ; the beauty of the dark brown stone, the rich hues of the stained glass, the right relation of tone value, to use a painter's term, between the structure and the lights—a relation sometimes wanting in French work, where the untempered lightness of the stone leaves us almost in doubt to which side the balance

of tone leans—the sombre blazoned shields which cluster along the walls, the succession on pier beyond pier of pictures powerful in colour and enhanced by the gleaming gold of fantastic carven frames, above all the succession of picturesque objects in mid-air above you, a large chandelier, a stately rood-cross, and, to crown all, Veit Stoss's masterpiece, the Annunciation, rich with gold and colour; all these things conspire to produce a whole, delightful and poetic, in spite of much that invites criticism in the architectural forms themselves. The same may be said of the interior of the far larger, statelier and more famous Stephan's-Kirche in Vienna, which, however, while it is even more solemn in its mellow gloom, is a building of much more individual character, and in many respects of far higher merit. In the Strasburg Cathedral we approach, as is natural in the valley of the Rhine, much more closely to the French type, and have a far more perfect expression of Ogival Art, though of a less distinctive physiognomy. Whilst, however, its internal effect is very impressive and delightful, it must be conceded that it owes a large part of its majesty and power to its choir and transepts, which are Romanesque, and magnificent examples of that style. Well, after all that I have ventured to advance in criticism of German Gothic churches, in which the true spirit of the style has not seemed to me to be assimilated, something has yet to be said concerning that stupendous achieve-

ment, the Cathedral of Cologne, a monument of indomitable will, of science and of stylistic orthodoxy. Imposing as it is externally from its colossal magnitude, its full impressiveness is to be felt in the interior. Based closely, but not slavishly, upon one of the noblest examples in France—Robert de Luzarches' masterpiece at Amiens—its beautiful rhythm, its noble consistency and unity, its soaring height, rivet the beholder's gaze, and fill him with that sense of uplifting of the spirit which breathes from the unbroken upward striving lines of a lofty Gothic nave; nevertheless, the sum of sensation produced by this marvellous structure as a whole is not, I think, entirely satisfying. We feel that we are in the presence and under the spell of a powerful will, grasping serenely and solving with unfailing intellectual resource a scientific problem; we bow, accordingly, before a triumph of science and volition; we are not, as it seems to me, thrilled by the kindling touch of Genius. And it is especially in the contemplation of the exterior that the sense of something wanting possesses us; the repetition *ad infinitum* of almost identical forms, and particularly of a fabulous multitude of vertical lines of extraordinary tenuity in comparison with the bulks over which they are strung, impart an arithmetical aridity to the whole that to me smacks, I must own, of prose and poverty of inspiration. I should wish, before leaving this church and the style of which it is the supreme

example in Germany, to invite you to share with me a lesson which I learnt from it on the value of sobriety in the distribution of ornament, a lesson which may, perhaps, at this time, not be valueless to my young architectural friends. The choir of Cologne Cathedral is a model of unadorned simplicity; caps to the shafts and a simple string-course below the triforium are its sole enrichments. The rather later nave is identical with the choir in all respects save one; the architect conceived the idea—at the outset an unsound one—of making it, though further from the main focus of interest, a little richer in decoration, and accordingly he added on the shoulders of the arches a cresting of crockets (not in themselves objectionable), and at their springing a row of grotesque birds; a slight addition, you will say, in so vast an edifice, yet startlingly and most instructively detrimental to the unity and chastity of the design. So important are seeming trifles in this great and stately Art.

Time does not allow me to do more than allude to the Brick Architecture of the North German Provinces, interesting as it is. Of the churches known to me the most remarkable is the Marienkirche at Lübeck, which, however, with all its merits leaves again beyond every other impression that of a style and a material not consenting one with the other. Very striking and absolutely original and of the soil are the civic buildings, in glazed and coloured bricks, of these northern cities; buildings of which the effect is in some

ways very pleasing, though rather toy-like, and marred at times by the excessive thickness of the mortar-bed between the bricks, and the obtrusive conscientiousness of the pointing.

It is curious to observe how, in spite of the exotic nature of the Gothic style, its outer forms took in the end so strong a hold on German artists that they clung to them, with all the tenacity of their race, for some time after they had been generally abandoned in Europe, so that, in Art, the movement known as the Renaissance did not finally prevail in Germany till nearly a hundred years later than in Italy from whence it emanated. Various causes besides Teutonic tenacity contributed to this circumstance. For some considerable time, Art, as we have already observed, had passed into the hands of the burghers and artisans, and not the practice of Art only, but all love and care for it; for in the upper classes culture had disappeared, the days of chivalry and its knightly singers were buried in oblivion, coarseness and brutality reigned unchallenged. In the world of intelligence the burgher class was supreme; its sturdy truthfulness, its earnest morality, its broad humour were well represented by the pedestrian Muse of the famous Meister-singer Hans Sachs, cobbler and poet, and assuredly also its untiring industry; did he not boast, and that some years before his death, of having written, between plays and poems, 6028 works, say 500,000 lines? Now, we have further to remember that

the great upheaval in the religious world called the Reformation, which convulsed Germany early in the sixteenth century, coincided in time with the recasting of the ideals of Art and Letters known as the Renaissance, and, as was natural in a people more strongly endowed on the ethic than on the æsthetic side, the moral upheaval overshadowed the artistic revolution, and imparted to Art in Germany a more than ever didactic tone. Again, the modification or, rather, reversal of artistic ideas was brought about under conditions wholly different from those which made the awakening to the dignity of Nature among the Italians truly a Renaissance, for the spirit that stirred in the Southern race was indeed the spirit of their own great past, born once more within them. Amongst a purely Germanic race, on the other hand, free from all mixture of Latin blood, these impulses were not at work; neither were the Germans impelled towards more gracious ideals by that sense of beauty which was so vivid among the Italians; whilst, therefore, they gradually assimilated the new forms of Art that came to them from beyond the Alps, they were slow to abandon, and, indeed, long concurrently retained, those more crabbed forms to which their hands had grown accustomed, and which the conservative spirit of the Guilds strove to uphold. It was, as we shall presently see, in the less trammelled Art of Painting that the new forms made their earliest mark, and though these forms had from



the beginning of the century crept tentatively into Architecture, it was not until after the religious peace of Augsburg, and, therefore, after Dürer and Holbein had carried German Painting to its highest point of development, that the Builder's Craft, under the impulse given by powerful princes and wealthy merchants, adopted frankly the spirit of the Renaissance.

The Architecture of the period is mainly civic, and expressive not only of great public opulence and private prosperity, but of a widespread love of outward splendour, and it may be added, by the way, of considerable self-consciousness; the number and the prodigious ornateness of the sepulchral monuments belonging to this period which fill the churches of Germany, are nothing short of amazing. Princely residences, civic halls, private houses were rebuilt with new magnificence—in the Southern Provinces under Italian, in the North and West under Netherlandish inspiration. Seldom, indeed never, very pure in style, not infrequently coarse in execution, sometimes, especially in the treatment of the human figure, even barbarous, these buildings are unfailingly picturesque and delightful in their general scenic aspect. Amongst the relatively pure examples I would cite the two, now ruined, façades in the court of the Castle of Heidelberg, and especially that built by the Elector, Otto Heinrich, though I am unable to accept fully the very high estimate of it current in Germany; and, on a smaller scale,

such structures as, for instance, the portico of the Cologne Town Hall and the bay-windows of the Maximilian Museum at Augsburg. In the treatment of ornament in this style you will find, in Germany, the same peculiarities as you noticed in the case of Gothic carving ; you will find the same want of measure and restraint, the same rugged individuality and tendency to artistic licence, but with them also the same inexhaustible and vigorous fancy. Here, indeed, a fine field lay open for the German love of the curling and redundant in line and form, and it was eagerly occupied. Amongst the first-fruits of this love for swelling curves we find that bulging out into bulbous forms of the lower portion of the shafts of columns which is characteristic of the school, and is, indeed, not without a certain fantastic charm ; but would that the love of excessive curves had never been carried further ! Here and there we come, as lawlessness grows, on truly startling phenomena ; so, for instance, on the façade of the Castle Chapel at Liebenstein, near Heilbronn, you may see, springing out from the face of the columns which flank its handsome door, two huge excrescences in the shape of projecting scrolls, modelled on the type of a tea-pot handle, or a sign of interrogation, adjuncts of which the purpose baffles conjecture, and the beauty is at least open to question. About this time also floral and vegetable forms in ornament disappear almost entirely, and are supplanted mainly by those cartouche-

forms that seem as if punched out of metal of uniform thickness and then curled abruptly at the edges—forms with which you are familiar in our own Tudor work, and which appear to have well-nigh exhausted the decorative fancies of our architects of that period. I have spoken also of a lack, in German architects, of subtle delight in varied rhythm, and this is felt no less in the phase of Art now before us than in that which preceded it, not only in monotony in the mapping out of spaces, but in monotony also in relief. This is especially noticeable in the treatment of the pilasters which play so great a part in the Architecture of the Renaissance, and on which the ornament, instead of that exquisite play and alternation of crisp projection and gradual evanescence in its relief which mark the best Italian work, shows here, too often, a dull uniformity of bulk and a too clumsy rudeness in its execution. Meanwhile, if it is easy to criticise these various failings, it behoves us to recognise one fact which stands out above them all, a fact which must command the warm, nay the envying, sympathy and admiration of every artist in our time, and especially in this land, namely the universal and imperious desire which possessed the Germans in those days to surround themselves, each according to his means, with the delights of Art in every form. Of the extent of this passion for the adornment of their houses, travel along the more conventional highways of Germany conveys no

adequate idea. Very many, indeed, have seen the beautiful façade of the Salzhaus in Frankfurt, of the Kammerzell House at Strasburg, or of the house in Hanover where Leibnitz lived and worked ; but it is only in such towns, for example, as Brunswick, or even better, Hildesheim, where house after house in long succession has some enrichment of carving or painting, or both, that one can appreciate to the full the universality of this taste, as well, no doubt, as its æsthetic limitation ; and whilst we see in these towns profoundly interesting examples of the external aspects of a German town of the Renaissance, we shall find, for instance, at Lübeck examples of internal decoration of remarkable effectiveness and splendour, and of high artistic quality, in the wainscoting of the War-Council Room of the Town Hall, and in the yet more beautiful adornment of a room in the house of a merchant of that city, one Fredehagen. In this room, which is not very spacious, the walls are clothed up to the ceiling with most elaborate, and, for the school, exceptionally pure and daintily wrought decoration, well fitted to the scale of the apartment ; columns, panels, niches, statues, caryatides, rich and delicate white marble reliefs happily contrasting with the carved and inlaid woods ; altogether a little masterpiece. Again, at the other extremity of the country, in Swabian Augsburg, the famous family of the Fugger had, at a somewhat earlier date, decorated their palace hardly less sump-

tuously, but giving preponderance, after the Southern fashion, to painting, and in this case using the hand of foreigners. Well might that enlightened dilettante, traveller, and future Pope, Enea Silvio, record his admiration of the internal appointment of the houses of the Germans.

But it is now time to consider briefly how the Arts of Painting and of Sculpture were, in their turn, affected by the conditions and circumstances of which we have so far taken note. And first of Sculpture, a subject on which I need not dwell at length, amongst other reasons because, whereas in speaking of Architecture much can be referred to broad æsthetic principles, in the case of Sculpture of which the human figure is the subject, criticism, except of the most general kind, is impossible, or at least ineffectual, in the absence of the work alluded to. Of German Sculpture it may be said, speaking broadly, that in spite of considerable individual achievement it cannot be regarded as often, if, indeed, ever reaching the highest level of excellence. What we have already observed of the peculiarities of the æsthetic organisation of the German race prepares us to find this so, whilst on the other hand its fine sincerity and its intensity of purpose lead us to expect, in the frequent absence of subtle delightfulness or reposeful dignity, a never-failing vigour, and an uncompromising, if unselecting, pursuit of Truth, and in this expectation we shall not be deceived. The first thing which would, I think,

strike you on a general survey of German Sculpture is the superiority of its early promise to its eventual accomplishment, and the sharp contrast between the work of the Middle Ages and that of the period which synchronises with the Renaissance in other lands. As far back as the Carlovingian days, and, indeed, still earlier, great activity was displayed in a form of plastic Art which remained in much favour till the twelfth century, namely carving in ivory, an Art inherited directly from the Romans, whose richly decorated consular tablets served as a model for those massive and often beautiful covers of missals and Gospel-books which are to be found in profusion in the Museums of Europe. These carvings, generally rude in execution, reveal at times surprising vitality and dramatic feeling. For vigour and freedom, combined with a certain classic dignity and restraint, an ivory in the library of St. Gallen may be cited. It is ascribed to one Tutilo, a monk of the tenth century, who seems in his amazing versatility of genius, married to exceptional bodily strength, to have been a sort of prototype of Leonardo da Vinci. Bronze came early into use for church furniture and for doors, under which head it may be interesting to you to note, by the way, a peculiarity in the treatment of relief on the famous doors of the Dom of Hildesheim. They are divided as usual into panels containing Biblical subjects. The figures in these panels are in low relief up to the height of the

chest, at which point they bend suddenly and boldly forward, and detach themselves at a very open angle from the background, producing by the strong shadows thus cast a very original, and I may add, an unexpectedly agreeable effect. Monumental sculpture was during the great building ages in Germany, as elsewhere, mainly called into activity and largely controlled by Architecture, and the increasing attenuation of the figures which peopled porches and decorated shafts is the natural corollary of the increasing narrowness of the vertical features in the Architecture of the day ; and it is amusing to note that the restraint and control which were, so to speak, taken in good part and with a sense of their fitness by the sculptors of France, seem frequently to have been resented by the more rugged and self-assertive Germans, and led to an angular obtrusion of elbows, and an irritable thrusting out of hips, in excess of anything we find in the Gothic sculpture of France, and which German Art, indeed, never quite shook off. Amidst not little that is clumsy and rude in the mediæval sculpture of Germany, there is yet much also to admire. I would quote, among many instances, the carvings on the exterior of Strasburg Cathedral, especially, perhaps, the statues and reliefs added in the thirteenth century to the beautiful Romanesque south porch—works full of dignity and pathos, ascribed to a sculptress, Sabina by name, who has been held, with little regard to dates, to be the

daughter of Erwin von Steinbach. Amongst the most interesting examples of sculpture of the thirteenth century are the effigies of Henry the Lion and his English wife, Mathilda, in Brunswick Cathedral. In this work are seen a calm and placid beauty and a stately breadth of form which I have hardly found anywhere under a later date, and incline one to feel that other things besides a Royal House suffered eclipse in the days of the decline of the Hohenstaufens. More than one other work of this period seems to me to justify some such feeling. There are, for instance, in the Cathedral of Bamberg, so remarkable for its sculptural enrichment, two statues, one a Virgin, the other a Sibyl, both beautiful, but the latter almost antique in its character, and stamped with a stateliness and nobility to which the days of the Minnesänger were surely more propitious than those of the rugged burghers who were soon to rise to power and to rule in the Art-producing world. Nor would it be difficult to add to the list of works which seemed to point to a loftier standard than was eventually to be reached in German sculpture.

During the thirteenth century, as in Architecture so in Sculpture, French influence made itself increasingly felt, and it prevailed largely during the fourteenth and part of the fifteenth centuries, in which period good, if not superlative, work was produced—at Freiburg, for example, at Nuremberg, at Brunswick, at Cologne and elsewhere.



As, however, the fifteenth century advanced, that tendency to realistic and individualising treatment of form which was to bring about, as we shall presently see, so vital a change in painting, began to assert itself strongly also in Sculpture, and this at a time when German carvers, impatient of control, were daily more shaking off the unwelcome and restraining yoke of Architecture ; and in the shape of carved shrines and altars, richly gilded and brightly coloured, a class of work came into vogue in which the artist, for the first time absolutely free, and having to deal with themes of a purely narrative and didactic character, indulged to the full that passion for telling a story in Art which is characteristic of the Teutonic peoples. I cannot but feel that this class of work elicited, in a majority of cases, little of the best, much of the less good in the artistic organisation of the people. In the engrossing desire to narrate dramatically, all sense of beauty and æsthetic propriety was obscured, the love of multiplicity, the lack of the sense of measure led, in the treatment of relief, to a crowding and a confusion which are often deplorable ; a crowding in all directions, so that not only is the field filled from angle to angle, but figures further huddle in detached relief one in front of the other—three, indeed sometimes four, deep. Again, an innate leaning to the angular, and a reaction against the lengthened clinging lines once imposed on Sculpture by the controlling architect, led to a vehement crinkling

and tossing of draperies, which bore no relation, except in their rocky angularity, to the gaunt and bony limbs they clad ; whilst the want of care for variety of emphasis brought about a spotty restlessness of aspect which distresses the eye in the absence of any controlling feature or restful interval. That these general blemishes were at times redeemed through the genius of individual artists is undeniable. Among such artists in the Gothic period, the first place is generally assigned to Adam Kraft, the author of the famous but, in my opinion, over-rated tabernacle—the Sakramentshäuschen as it is called—in the Lorenzkirche in Nuremberg, and of other well-known and meritorious works in that city, such as the Pergersdorf Monument in the Frauenkirche, and the reliefs on the exterior of the church of St. Sebaldus. Far more attractive, however, to me personally is Veit-Stoss, whose beautiful work in the Lorenzkirche I have already noted, and to whom is ascribed a Madonna rapt in Adoration, now seen in the Germanic Museum in Nuremberg, a work which in its dignity and sweetness stands alone in German Gothic Sculpture ; a work, too, which, wrought as it was by a worthless, disreputable fellow, shows in its elevation, pathetically enough, how purifying a thing within itself is this Art of yours to those who love it nobly. In the works of which I have so far spoken no trace is visible of Italian forms ; in those, however, of the renowned bronze founder, Peter Vischer, who,

though somewhat younger than Kraft, produced his best known work only a score of years after the completion of that artist's shrine in the church of St. Lorenz, their fascination is early seen to assert itself; and if in his tomb of Saint Sebaldus the constructive idea is Gothic, the forms are almost wholly those of the Italian Renaissance. This interesting monument, which can be studied by you, as can also Adam Kraft's Entombment, at the South Kensington Museum, is in its conception elegant, original, and full of fancy, a fancy rather unpruned, especially in the treatment of the base, which shows much licence and confusion in its design. It is impossible not to be charmed with this rich and fantastic work, on which honest Peter Vischer, whose quaint image in his simple working garb confronts you at the foot of his masterpiece, laboured, with his five sons, lovingly, for a dozen years, and it is only on a close inspection—and reluctantly—that we become aware of the really curious rudeness of much of its workmanship, which we cannot help mentally comparing with the admirable finish of, for instance, the thirteenth-century effigy in Cologne Cathedral of Conrad von Hochstaden, its founder. Before leaving the subject of German sculpture, I should like to give you one illustration, and an amusing one, of a marked characteristic of German Art, namely the comprehensive love it evinces for all animal creation, not for birds only—they sweeten with their presence all mediæval Art—but for

every kind of beast also, and of insect. In the Stephan's-Kirche in Vienna there is a very fine and stately monument erected to the memory of the Emperor Frederic the Third—I will not dwell here on its considerable merits, but will confine myself to the point in question. Round its base there runs, between vigorous mouldings, a sort of shallow trough, in which wallow and disport themselves beasts of various kinds, real and imaginary. Prominent amongst them is a dog, bent, as is the wont of dogs, and only too successfully, on the quest of fleas about his person. Now, deceived by the humble position in the design of this inquiring animal, I first saw in the placing of the incident a symbolic allusion to the leaving here below in death of the unclean things of the world ; but—alas for my illusions !—I presently discovered a precisely similar episode on the very crown of the upper cornice, and above a series of sculptures treating, all of them, subjects from Holy Writ.

And now, in conclusion, a word on the subject of Painting, in which branch of Art Germany rose, in the persons of two consummate artists, to levels not reached by her in Sculpture. In those early days in which we just now noted such marked activity in plastic Art, Painting also, both in the shape of illumination and of mural decoration, was widely practised, and indeed, for this latter form of Art, Romanesque churches were peculiarly adapted ; the broad expanse of naked wall which,

in the general absence of a triforium, separated the aisle arches from the upper windows, calling imperatively for pictorial adornment. There is in fact little doubt that every important church of the Romanesque period was enriched, more or less, with mural painting ; some churches, indeed, from end to end, as in the case of that most beautiful and suggestive example, St. Mary on the Capitol in Cologne, in which there is not a single sculptured ornament and hardly a moulding anywhere, the entire surface, walls, piers and ceiling, being clothed in one many-coloured garment. Of the paintings of this period the great majority has unfortunately disappeared, and those that have escaped destruction have suffered in most cases such ruthless renovation that it is difficult to form any judgment as to their quality. The best example amongst those that I have seen, and a fairly preserved one, is on the roof of the nave of the Michael's-Kirche at Hildesheim, a rich and powerful design, along the centre of which is unfolded in successive fields a colossal tree of Jesse, a work of the middle of the fourteenth century. With the introduction of the Gothic style, and the resulting curtailment of wall-space, the place of wall-painting in the architectural scheme was usurped, as in France, by painting on glass, of the achievements of which, in Germany, forced as I am to a condensation less than just to so wide a subject, I can say here no more than that I feel unable to endorse fully the high opinion formed of

it by German critics. Some extremely fine, and, especially in the matter of tone, very powerful specimens I have indeed seen, but in too many cases I have found colour harsh and crude, sometimes to a distressing extent. I have before my mind, amongst others, certain windows in the clerestory of a great cathedral, in which a vicious green, a virulent yellow, and a ruthless red unite in a consent which recalls, in the region of sound, the harmonies that greet us within the cockatoo house of the Zoological Gardens. Meanwhile, if mural painting was thus starved and pushed aside, easel painting blossomed vigorously forth, and, not seldom, with admirable results, as we shall presently see. It is customary, on grounds which are not obvious to me, to include in a survey of German painting the works of the school of Slavonic Bohemia, the earliest to spring into prominence and the first to die out. Bowing to this custom I will say here that such works of this school as I have seen in Prague and in Vienna are, in the depth of their colour and in a certain forceful dignity, very striking, and suggest high promise of eventual development. A rather curious circumstance may be noted in regard to them, namely, that they bring before us what we do not expect among Slavs, a type of very long-nosed men. An early seat of activity in painting was also Nuremberg, but that Art reaches, during the Middle Ages, its highest level in the Rhineland, and notably and admittedly in pious and

opulent Cologne. "No limner of Cologne or of Maestricht," exclaims Wolfram von Eschenbach in describing Parsival, radiant in his knightly armour, "could paint him more beautiful than he was." Here two masters especially stand forth in the close of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries, Meister Wilhelm, and, after him, Meister Stephan Lochner, both artists of a high order. Great suavity and dignity marked their Art—an Art which reflected the mystic fervour that reigned in those days at Cologne. It was an Art from which character and individualisation were almost wholly absent, and of which the unreal aspect was emphasised by the habitual omission of any indication of sky or landscape, and by the relief of the figures against a background of gold, often stamped with a richly decorative pattern. In the second half of the fifteenth century, the transformation which we have already observed in statuary gradually asserted itself in painting also, under influences drawn from Flanders; for it is to Flanders and not to Italy that young German artists were wont at that period to turn for inspiration and for training. Fired by the example of the Van Eycks, of Rogier van de Weyde and of others, painters in Germany betook themselves to a closer observation of Nature, and a more realistic tone was soon manifest in their works. Landscape now began to assert itself, but so deep-rooted was the habit of the traditional background of gold that some

further time elapsed before a blue sky was suffered to take its place behind tree, and hill and city. In the paintings of this second phase of the Cologne School much life and a facile invention are seen, but, nevertheless, in every quality of technical perfection, they fall far short of their Flemish prototypes; it is further south, at Colmar, in the region of the Upper Rhine, and in the great centres of Franconia and Swabia, that we must look for the fullest development of the new school and for its highest achievements. The greatest precursor of the riper and more accomplished Art of Albert Dürer was without doubt Martin Schöngauer of Colmar, whose "Madonna in the Rose-Bower," now in the Church of St. Martin of that city, is a work of strange nobility and force, a painting Flemish, indeed, in its inspiration, but with something also of Southern gravity and repose which is never absent from his work, and which we shall miss in the far completer Art of his famous successor, Dürer. In the chief city of Franconia, and the centre, in that day, of the trade of Europe, in Nuremberg, where we have already seen Architecture and Sculpture flourish, was also a school of painters, of which the patriarch, if we may so call him, was Michael Wohlgemuth, the master of Dürer, an able, a vigorous, a prolific, and, I fear we must add, a rather prosaic and humdrum wielder of the brush, whose virtues and defects, no doubt, mirrored in the main those of the majority of his and Hans



Sachs' fellow-townsmen. It is curious, by the way, to note that in the age in which intellectual life thrived exclusively among the burgher class, and at a time when there was an enormous demand for works of Art, either for delight, or as an outward sign of worldly prosperity, or for didactic purposes, the general status of an artist was as humble as his remuneration was small. Even the most conspicuous painters, Albert Dürer himself not excepted, lived, when in their own country, largely by designs for engraving on wood or copper, and were, in fact, more widely known through this channel than through any other. Holbein had to leave Bâle because he could not make an adequate living there, and nothing struck Dürer more in Venice than the high social esteem in which painters were held. "Here," he writes to his friend Pirkheimer, "I am a gentleman; at home I am but a vagabond."

I am not here attempting any enumeration of German artists or their works; I am simply seeking to trace in its general features the development of Art in Germany. I shall therefore not dwell on the career of the great artist whom I have last named: his magnificent gifts, his inexhaustible fecundity of invention, his never-faltering power of work are known to you, if in no other way, through numberless woodcuts and engravings bearing his name and reproducing his drawings, for you have, unfortunately, in this country, little access to his painted works. A

word or two will suffice as to the main characteristics of his genius. Albert Dürer may be regarded as *par excellence* the typical German artist—far more so than his great contemporary Holbein. He was a man of a strong and upright nature, bent on pure and high ideals, a man ever seeking, if I may use his own characteristic expression, to make known through his work the mysterious treasure that was laid up in his heart; he was a thinker, a theorist, and, as you know, a writer; like many of the great artists of the Renaissance, he was steeped also in the love of Science. His work was in his own image; it was, like nearly all German Art, primarily ethic in its complexion; like all German Art it bore traces of foreign influence—drawn, in his case, first from Flanders and later from Italy. In his work, as in all German Art, the national character asserted itself above every trammel of external influence. Superbly inexhaustible as a designer, as a draughtsman he was powerful, thorough, and minute to a marvel, but never without a certain almost calligraphic mannerism of hand, wanting in spontaneous simplicity—never broadly serene. In his colour he was rich and vivid, not always unerring as to his harmonies, not alluring in his execution—withal a giant.

Hardly less important than Nuremberg as a centre of wealth and commerce, or in its love of Art, was the great Swabian city, Augsburg, the home of those princes among the merchants

of this day, the Fuggers; and of the genius of the Swabian School, Hans Holbein the younger, the only other painter to whom time allows me to make special allusion, is the noblest product and the supreme glory. I say the Swabian School; for although the name of Holbein is closely connected with Bâle, where he long resided, he was born at Augsburg, in which town his father, himself an artist of great gifts, lived and worked. In Holbein we have a complete contrast to the great Franconian of whom I have just spoken; a man not prone to theorise, not steeped in speculation, a dreamer of no dreams; without passion but full of joyous fancies, he looked out with serene eyes upon the world around him; accepting Nature without preoccupation or afterthought, but with a keen sense of all her subtle beauties, loving her simply and for herself. As a draughtsman he displayed a flow, a fulness of form, and an almost classic restraint which are wanting in the work of Dürer, and are, indeed, not found elsewhere in German Art. As a colourist, he had a keen sense of the values of tone relations, a sense in which Dürer again was lacking; not so Teutonic in every way as the Nuremberg master, he formed a link between the Italian and the German races. A less powerful personality than Dürer, he was a far superior painter. Proud may that country be indeed that counts two names so great in Art. I am loth to pass over in silence the many other men, some of them justly

known to fame, that adorned the schools of which I have spoken, and others of which I have made no mention ; but what I have said may, perhaps, suffice to illustrate the subject of our enquiry.

Meanwhile, in an estimate of the artistic production of Germany some mention—if brief—must find a place of its surprising fruitfulness in the field of those minor Arts which subserve more immediately the material needs of men. I have spoken already of the great wealth of jewelry and goldsmith's work which has been preserved to us from very early days, and in exceptional abundance from the Carlovingian age, at which period there were great schools of the goldsmith's craft both at Cologne and at Aachen. The magnificence of the shrines, reliquaries, chalices, and the like produced at that time is indeed truly astonishing. A love of work in the precious metals continued to burn through the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance yielded some of its most beautiful fruit at the hands of the goldsmiths and jewellers, for whom Dürer, the Behams, and Holbein, amongst others, furnished designs that have not since been surpassed. Throughout the Middle Ages it was in the service of the Church that the goldsmiths chiefly laboured, but not the goldsmiths only ; and such works at the great seven-armed candelabra at Brunswick, and the large chandelier which spans the nave of the Cathedral of Hildesheim, are there to show us what,

already in the eleventh century, the brassfounders of Germany could achieve. Gradually, however, with the growing prosperity of the cities, and the increasing wealth which a world-wide commerce poured into the pockets of the burghers, Art found more and more scope in the adornment of civic and private life. More and more it seized upon every object, not of mere display but of daily use ; everywhere we see manifest that constant and consistent desire that everything which has form and colour and is capable of adornment shall be ennobled by the touch of Art, which is such a lesson and rebuke to us, who are of kindred blood, in this day of desultory dilettantism or vague indifference. For not the paraphernalia of State alone, not alone the armour of the knight or the chain of the patrician were thought, in that more favoured day than ours, to call for the added grace of Beauty, but every humblest, household, necessary thing ; the platter though of lead, the spoon albeit of wood, the knife, the mug, the jug, the housewife's key, the dresser, the cupboard—all these called forth in turn delightful manifestations of designing skill ; and on few objects, perhaps, were loving care and abounding adornment more freely lavished than on that symbol in the eyes of every German of the sheltered peace of home—the earthen stove. On all these things we read the stamp of the race ; we trace in them its virtues of vigour, of industry, and

of inexhaustible intellectual fertility; we trace in them also its shortcomings: the lack of delicacy of touch, and of a controlling sense of Beauty.

One more craft remains yet to be noticed which is very characteristic of Germany, and one which gave exceptional scope to the German love of the intricate and fantastic, namely the beautiful craft of the workers in iron. Gates, chapel railings, railings round fonts in churches, railings round those many public fountains with which German streets are gay, attest everywhere their skill in a profusion of rich and fanciful designs, often of great charm and felicity—invariably of much character.

Such then was, during the Renaissance period, the activity of German craftsmen over every field of Art. A great national convulsion was soon to paralyse and arrest it. In the eighteenth year of the seventeenth century the ruthless war broke out which, in the name of religion, ravaged the land for thirty years, bringing ruin to Germany and a long eclipse to its intellectual life.

Here, therefore, I leave this too fragmentary and inadequate outline of a great subject, with the hope only that I may have made clear, in some few points at least, the bearing of the facts I have brought before you in the elucidation of the problem with which for some years past these

addresses have been concerned. And, surely, in no country have the fundamental attributes of a race more vividly stamped themselves for good or for not good on its artistic production, than in the land of the strong and strenuous race which has occupied our thoughts to-night.

THE END





